

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

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Daryl Reid  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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

Monday, April 30, 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 and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 8—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act  
(Use of Child Safety Seats)**

**Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs):** I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), that The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Use of Child Safety Seats) now be read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Rondeau:** This proposed legislation can truly save lives. Booster-seat legislation has been shown to increase the use of booster seats and reduce serious injuries and fatalities. The requirements will be to use booster seats until children meet a specific age, weight or height requirements, and using prescriptive standards of child-restraining devices as specified in the legislation and regulations.

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

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

**Bill 13—The Renewable Energy Jobs Act**

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 13, The Renewable Energy Jobs Act; Loi sur les emplois dans le domaine de l'énergie renouvelable, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Chomiak:** I'm pleased to introduce this bill which will support local manufacturers of equipment, components or construction materials that will be used in the production, generation, transmission or distribution of renewable energy in the province.

Essentially, the bill establishes the renewable energy jobs funding program which will provide loans to eligible manufacturers of renewable energy technology.

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

**Bill 200—The Seniors' Rights Act**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** I move, seconded by the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), that Bill 200, The Seniors' Rights Act, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mrs. Rowat:** Mr. Speaker, this bill was established to ensure that the rights of seniors are enshrined in legislation so that they cannot be superseded by a policy decision of government.

This bill establishes a bill of rights for Manitoba seniors, including the right to freedom, independence and individual initiative in planning and managing his or her own life, the right to access affordable and appropriate services and programs, the right to be able to remain in his or her own community, the right to a system where long-term care needs are met, the right to access to services and many other rights, Mr. Speaker, and I would urge this government to support it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

## PETITIONS

**Cellular Phone Service in Southeastern Manitoba**

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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, Mr. Speaker, 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 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, industry 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 cellular phone service in southeastern Manitoba in order to ensure that people and property can be better protected in the future.

And this petition is signed by C. Primus, J. MacFarlane and L. Catellier and many, many 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.

\* (13:40)

#### **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 PTH No. 68.

The Rural Municipality of Ste. Rose and the town of Ste. Rose have both raised concerns with the Highway Traffic Board about the current speed limit on the 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 the lowering—that lowering the current 100-kilometre-an-hour speed limit on a 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 consider the importance of reducing the speed limit on PTH No. 5 to 80 kilometres an hour in the vicinity of the town of Ste. Rose from the west side of the Turtle River Bridge to the south side of the access to the Ste. Rose Auction Mart to help protect motorists' safety.

This petition is signed by G. McKinnon, B. Zastre, W. Marrs and many, many other fine Manitobans.

#### **TABLING OF REPORTS**

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act):** I'm pleased to table the Manitoba Public Insurance fourth quarter preliminary and unaudited quarterly final report for the 12 months ended February 29th, 2012.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship):** Table the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation report for 2010-11 and the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund supplementary report for Estimates.

#### **Introduction of Guests**

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I wish to draw to the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have, from North Interlake Home Educators, 30 students under the direction of Myrna Reimer. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff).

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Budget Withdrawal Request

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Tomorrow is May 1st and tomorrow is the first day that Manitoba families begin to pay the price for this NDP government's broken promises. Tomorrow is the day that gas taxes go up and Manitobans get hit in the pocketbooks and will fully realize the impact of this Premier's broken-promise budget that was introduced 13 days ago.

I want to ask the Premier: Before the budget comes to a vote, will he withdraw that budget and bring in a budget that sides with hard-working Manitoba families?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** The gas tax will remain the second lowest in Canada. The amount of money that will be raised by that will be spent \$2 in bridges and roads for every dollar raised in gas tax. All will go back into repairing the infrastructure so desperately in need of repair throughout the province of Manitoba. Manitobans understand that that invested in infrastructure makes a difference in their communities for safer roads and economic development. And we will proceed in such a way that we improve all the rural communities and all the communities in Manitoba when it comes to roads, bridges, and other forms of infrastructure.

### Government Vote

**Mr. McFadyen:** And the Premier knows well that there's no increase in spending on highways and roads across the province of Manitoba to go along with the increased tax on gasoline, and so Manitobans are being asked to pay more to get less in terms of the quality of our roads around the province of Manitoba.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, it's a broken promise, a promise that they made only seven months ago, and the Premier said it himself that we're going to move ahead without raising taxes and this is something we're going to deliver on.

Mr. Speaker, every one of the NDP MLAs campaigned on a promise not to raise taxes. Will he today give those MLAs the freedom to vote with their constituents, to vote in favour of the promises they made, and vote against this NDP budget?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, when the members opposite were in government, they raised the gas tax and less than 50 cents—less than 50 cents—on every

dollar went into roads and infrastructure. In our case, for every dollar we raise in gas tax, we spend \$2 on roads and infrastructure. The difference is dramatic. We're making improvements in roads and bridges and highways, including CentrePort, all across Manitoba. The money is going to real, dramatic, tangible improvements in our infrastructure.

The gas tax remains the second lowest in Canada, and it's an opportunity for us to rebuild after the flood, which we're going to do.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Again, there's no increase in spending on roads and bridges in this budget, but there's an increase in costs on Manitoba families which they start to feel tomorrow, May the 1st. May Day is the day that they start to pay more, for Manitoba families.

Mr. Speaker, every one of his candidates went door to door seven months ago, looking people in the eye and saying, we will not raise your taxes. That's our commitment. If you support us, we won't raise taxes.

They shook people's hands. They looked them in the eyes. They said, no new taxes if you vote for our party.

Will he allow his MLAs, who campaigned on that commitment seven months ago, to honour their word today and vote against this terrible budget?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the \$589 million that's being spent on infrastructure in Manitoba maintains a record-high investment. If you take a look at any chart on infrastructure and investment over the last 12, 13 years—and it's steadily gone up every single year—we're maintaining that record-high investment in roads in Manitoba. And we will vote for a budget that rebuilds this province and creates economic prosperity for the future, not do what members opposite did: tax more and spend less.

### Budget

#### Government Record on Election Promises

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, is that they're increasing the gas tax in Manitoba, but they're decreasing the infrastructure capital investment by 13.2 per cent. Those are the facts. It's spend more, get less from this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, the—tomorrow is the first day Manitoba families will feel the broken NDP promise. Tomorrow is gas-tax hike day in Manitoba. Everyone filling up at the pump will be paying

2.5 cents a litre more than they are today because of this NDP's government—government's inability to keep their election promise.

Why is the NDP government breaking their promise to families in Manitoba?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that members opposite had the chance to think about this over the weekend and think about all the good things in this budget for Manitoba families, including a commitment to infrastructure in Manitoba.

Members opposite can pretend there was no flood last year, if they like, and that there's no expenses connected with that flood, Mr. Speaker. They can play that game if they like. This government, with the second lowest provincial taxes on gas, Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to assigning those dollars to our infrastructure, as we've done for 12 years in a row.

This Budget 2012 continues that good trend towards more investment in infrastructure because it's important to Manitoba families and it's important to our provincial economy.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, Mr. Speaker, gas taxes are up \$48 million and the infrastructure capital investment in this budget, this NDP budget, is down \$99 million. So where is the money going?

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the gas taxes will rise from 11.5 cents to 14 cents per litre. The NDP government promised they wouldn't raise taxes in the last election, yet tomorrow marks the first time since the budget was introduced that Manitoba families will feel the pain from this NDP government's broken promise.

Why did the NDP government break their promise to families in Manitoba?

**Mr. Struthers:** Mr. Speaker, our friend from Tuxedo is just wrong.

Mr. Speaker, \$589 million was the announcement, not last week, the week before, just after we presented that budget to this House. That's a lot of money. That's a lot of investment in the roads and bridges and infrastructure in Manitoba. And it builds on the commitment that we've made and that we've followed through on for \$4 billion over 10 years, which we are ahead of schedule on.

So, Mr. Speaker, we need to take no lessons from members opposite when it comes to showing

who's committed to and supports infrastructure in this province.

\* (13:50)

### Government Vote

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this—the NDP budget will be voted on shortly in this Chamber, and it's the last chance for this NDP government to reverse their decision to break their promise to Manitoba families. In this budget, they broke their promise to seniors, to women, to volunteers, to Manitoba families, to other hard-working Manitobans.

Will they reverse their decision today to break their promise or will they—or Manitobans be forced to pay for their spending addiction?

**Mr. Struthers:** Every one of the families, every one of the groups that the member just read out from her answer benefits through Budget 2012, Mr. Speaker, every one of those sectors that she's talking about.

We had clearly some choices to make. One of the choices that members opposite encouraged us to take on was to cut deeply, cut deeply into health care and education and not invest in infrastructure and cut deeply into kids—services for kids. We didn't take their advice. They may not be happy about that, but we're not going to throw those very important Manitoba values underneath the bus.

We're going to come back into balance in 2014. We're going to work hard to do that, and we're going to do it by protecting the things that Manitobans matter—that matter most to Manitobans.

### Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Vehicle Registration Fee Increase

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** This budget contains a \$35 increase in the vehicle registration fee, yet another tax grab by a government that cannot control its spending.

A week and a half ago, when Manitoba Public Insurance appeared before the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations, I asked to which vehicles this fee would apply. Neither the minister nor the chair of MPI nor the CEO of MPI could answer the question.

Can the minister now identify the complete list of vehicles to which this cash grab will apply?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker—and I want to

put on the record that members opposite have absolutely no credibility when it comes to investing in transportation infrastructure in this province. And, you know, for members opposite to get up the—today and try and fool Manitobans into thinking that they care about our roads and our bridges across this province.

When they were in government, I want to tell you what they invested. It was \$180 million. It's now—in this year going to be \$589 million. That's the NDP difference.

**Mr. Helwer:** The government seems to be confused. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, as we've heard, we've got a 2.5 per cent gas tax increase and then they're cutting twice as much from the government infrastructure. How can they do this? Obviously, they've confused infrastructure with superstructure.

Mr. Speaker, the minister was not able to give us a list of vehicles in committee. Is this a—fee a surprise to the government? Was there no planning involved? We know from committee that there was no consultation.

When will the minister be able to give us a list of vehicles to which this fee will apply, and do we have a final date when this tax increase will take effect?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that the member opposite would talk about planning, because when we inherited government in 1999, we had an infrastructure that was run into the ground.

I remind people what it was like to travel Highway 75. You know, Highway 1, Highway 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Highway 59—well, we've improved those highways. But more importantly, we put in place a plan. You know, Mr. Speaker, because in your previous role you chaired the Manitoba 2020 vision.

So if the member wants to know what a plan is, we said \$4 billion over a 10-year period. We've exceeded that every one of the last four years.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I'm having a great deal of difficulty hearing the questions posed and the answers to the questions. I ask for the co-operation of all honourable members. Please allow the person who has the floor to ask the question and the various ministers to answer the questions that have been posed. I ask for your co-operation.

**Mr. Helwer:** Obviously, 20/20 hindsight, because we were able to balance budgets, and this government has no capacity to do that.

Mr. vehicle—Mr. Speaker, this vehicle registration fee is not subject to review by the Public Utilities Board, as MPI insurance changes are. There is no regulatory agency that is able to protect Manitobans from this tax increase. The fee increase is a pure cash grab, a tax increase that breaks this government's promise to all Manitobans. This fee has increased 220 per cent since 1999.

When will this government stop misleading Manitobans and try to live within its means?

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, the members opposite campaigned in the last election on bringing the books of the Manitoba Province back into balance. When? In 2018.

We are not only going to be bringing the books back into balance well before that, what we are going to do is build our highway system. And I suggest the member opposite may want to take a trip around his riding, because if he checks, on Highway 10, he'll see major worth—work north of Brandon. He'll see 18 kilometres of paving between Binscarth and Foxwarren. He'll see significant work on Highway No. 1.

We're making a difference all throughout Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask the members opposite, when it comes to the vote, to decide: are they going to vote for an investment in highways and infrastructure? Because that's what we're doing in this budget; we've done in every one of the budgets we've had since we've been in government since 1999.

### Regional Health Authorities

#### Administration Costs—Legislation Proclamation

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, I think the minister shattered my eardrums.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** There appears to be members of this House that wish to have a conversation, and might I suggest to them that we have a loge to my right and one to my left for you to have those conversations, or perhaps outside of the Chamber. I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members. Please allow question period to proceed.

The honourable member for Charleswood has the floor.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Health introduced legislation a year ago that was supposed to cap all RHA admin costs. The

legislation passed, but the Minister of Health told me last week that parts of the legislation that would cap rural RHA admin costs were never proclaimed.

Can the Minister of Health tell us why not?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** If the member would reflect on the legislation as written and passed, it was contemplated specifically in the document that the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority would be capped at 2.99 per cent. I'm happy to report to the House today that, in fact, those corporate spending costs for the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority today are 2.81 per cent, exceeding that promise.

Further, Mr. Speaker, as it was explained last year, and I'll explain again to the member, the rural and northern regional health authorities did require some additional work to look at the uniqueness of their circumstances. So it wasn't set out at that time in the legislation.

Certainly we think it will be in keeping with the kind of number that the Winnipeg region is living with, and, indeed, we're going to work with our regions, particularly in light of the mergers that are upcoming, to have a corporate spending cap that reflects funds going to the front line.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, the RHA admin costs have exploded under this government.

So last year she made a big deal saying that she was going to control all RHA admin costs by capping all of them. So she brought in legislation, she had her photo op, she made a big deal of it, and then now she's turned around and she's ignored her own legislation.

Why did she not bring in the cap on all the RHAs? Why didn't she follow her own legislation? She's had a whole year to do it. Why didn't she follow through?

**Ms. Oswald:** I will remind the member that it was laid out clearly in the legislation—which, if I recall, she voted for—that, indeed, the specific 2.99 number would apply immediately to the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and that we would work with our rural and our northern RHAs to find an appropriate level for corporate spending.

I would also note for the member that the Canadian Institute for Health Information clearly

states that our corporate spending has been trending down and is now among the lowest in the nation.

So, from the individual who belongs to a party that actually created 13 regional health authorities with no caps on spending at the same time that they were firing nurses, it's odd, but I'm not really going to take her advice on this, Sir.

\*(14:00)

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for Charleswood, the final supplementary.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, 10 of the 11 RHAs did not have their admin costs capped as this minister indicated that she was going to do. Their track record to control RHA admin costs is absolutely dismal. Now she says she's going to go out there and amalgamate all the RHAs and control admin costs that way. But she's got a serious lack of credibility because she's not even following through on her own legislation to control RHA admin costs, and they have skyrocketed under this government.

So why should anybody believe her now that by amalgamating RHAs that she is even going to be able to control RHA admin costs, Mr. Speaker?

**Ms. Oswald:** As a point of interest, Mr. Speaker, in the '07 election, the Conservatives promised a 3 per cent cap in Winnipeg; we're lower than that now. And they promised no caps at all for rural.

#### **Assistant Deputy Minister Minister's Knowledge of Email**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, an email which said, and I quote: "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," end quote, was sent by the Minister of Immigration's assistant deputy minister to taxpayer-funded immigrant service organizations, encouraging them to take the day off to attend an NDP political rally. The minister claims that she was not behind that email, but, to quote an article in the media on Saturday, that bouders on the unbelievable.

Is this Minister of Immigration (Ms. Melnick) saying she does not have to ask the staff to do her political bidding because the civil service has become so politicized it isn't even necessary?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** I think we saw an incredible display here of democracy last week when we

saw—or the week before, I guess, now, when we saw so many people come to the Legislature to voice their support for the Provincial Nominee Program, so many folks that have been involved in building that program, so many people who have been successful in building their lives, and in helping to build the province.

And that was an incredible, I think, show of support for that program, which, of course, was founded under the members opposite, was continued under this government, and has done incredible things. And I think, really, the way forward on this issue would be for all of us to come together and support what has been one of the best programs in the country.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Immigration (Ms. Melnick) used her staff to orchestrate a political rally for her own political purposes. She says that she sees nothing wrong with her ADM encouraging taxpayer-funded immigrant settlement services agencies to come to the Legislature to support the NDP position.

She says the ADM acted on his own. If the ADM acted on his own, has—and has become so entrenched in enforcing party politics on the ground level that no direction from the minister was necessary, where is the ministerial responsibility, Mr. Speaker? The Minister of Immigration is ultimately accountable for the actions of those in her department.

Is she responsible for her department, Mr. Speaker, or is she not? Did she send that email?

**Ms. Howard:** You know, as we look at the budget and the need for economic growth in this province, we know that one of the main drivers of that growth has been population growth. And one of the main drivers of that population growth has been a very successful partnership between us and the federal government in building the number of people who are coming to Manitoba, who are being successful in Manitoba.

We have some of the great—the greatest returns on investment by seeing those folks get jobs in record numbers, buy houses in record numbers, and build this province. So we're proud of that program. And they should be, too, proud of that program, because they helped to start it. And so now is the time for us all to come together to support the economic growth of this province, to support the

Provincial Nominee Program, and to make sure that it can continue to thrive.

I think it would be a great time for folks to set aside their partisan differences and try to work together to ensure the future of this province.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Immigration has corrupted the civil service. She has either directed her staff to become politically involved, which is an abuse of power, or they are so entrenched that they either have to agree with what the minister has to say or they're going to have to learn to do so if they want to keep their jobs. When a civil service is only there to do the bidding of government and not there for the people of Manitoba, democracy is not served.

Mr. Speaker, did this minister direct her staff to do her political bidding, or have they become so entrenched with this NDP government she can simply rely on them to do her bidding without actually having to ask?

We need some answers, Mr. Speaker. The minister has to admit that she did it or call on her ADM to admit that he was out of line.

**Ms. Howard:** Well, you know, everybody is welcome to come to this Legislature and listen to the debate. That's one of the great things about the Legislature. Everybody's welcome to come here, and I think, you know, it's incumbent upon all of us to be communicating what's happening here so people can come and take part.

But I will, for the members opposite, give them an example of using the civil service for their own political purposes. I can happily refer them to the election of '95 in which a Treasury Board official was found—and was found guilty of interfering with an election by providing money to a third-party candidate in order to split the vote. And, I believe, in the findings of that, the chief commissioner who looked into that referred to as never having seen so many liars in his life. That is an example of the civil service interfering in politics, an example for which they were responsible.

#### **Assistant Deputy Minister Minister's Knowledge of Email**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, I don't know how long the Minister of Immigration (Ms. Melnick) is going to be contained in the ministerial protection program, but I hope that they will release her for this next question. Because what

is clear is that a high-ranking member of the civil servants sent out an email to employees and new Canadians asking them to come to what was essentially a political rally for the NDP. We don't know whether the minister gave the go-ahead for this email, whether the civil servant is now so entrenched in the NDP that they don't even know the difference. I suspect that either is plausible or perhaps both.

But I will call on this Minister of Immigration (Ms. Melnick). She gets paid to be the Minister of Immigration, she cashes her cheque every other week, but will she stand up and indicate whether she directed that email to go out? Do your job, stand up, answer the question, Madam Minister.

**Mr. Speaker:** I wish to draw to the attention of all members of the House that any questions that are posed should be directed to the Chair, and I ask for the co-operation of all honourable members.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** Well, you know, I have had the great good fortune of visiting the member opposite who asked the question, visiting his constituency and meeting with people there who work in settlement services, was working—meeting some of the newcomers that have come to his constituency who are responsible for making his area one of the fastest growing in the province.

And I think that what we can probably both agree on is the Provincial Nominee Program has been an incredible success. And one of the reasons it's been an incredible success, Mr. Speaker, is not only because we have a partnership in selecting people who want to come to Manitoba, but because we've been able to work with so many non-profit organizations and making sure—and employers, and making sure the services available to those newcomers are what they need in order to be successful. We have an opportunity to come together, to work together to protect that program, and I wish that we could all take advantage of that opportunity.

#### **Request for Standing Committee**

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Speaker, unless I missed the news release this morning, I don't think there's been a Cabinet shuffle, and I still think—

**An Honourable Member:** There should be.

**Mr. Goertzen:** —that there—maybe there should be, but I don't think there was.

And I think that the member for Riel is still the Minister of Immigration, and I'm asking her, since it was her department, her ADM who sent out this email, perhaps under her direction, whether she will stand up.

This is a serious issue and it's one of the reasons I think we need to have a committee of the Legislature called, with the ADM brought to that committee, with this minister brought to that committee, with the ability to have evidence brought forward.

If this minister is not going to stand up and do her job, I'm asking the government whether they'll call a committee with the ADM, with the minister, so we could ask questions and have evidence produced on this serious issue, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:10)

**Ms. Howard:** You know, I would welcome a discussion on the successful program—on the successful Provincial Nominee Program. This is a program that has been recognized internationally, Mr. Speaker. It's a program that's been recognized by *The New York Times* as being one of the unique approaches to immigration. And there's such a broad consensus in this province—of business people, of community folks, of new immigrants, of people who are long-time Manitoba residents—a broad consensus that immigration has been good for Manitoba.

And I would hate to put that consensus at risk through this kind of ongoing battle when we should be coming together to protect what has been not only the key ingredient in Manitoba's economic success but also the key—or reason that Manitoba has become a more diverse province and a more welcoming province. I'm sure we can agree on that, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Goertzen:** You know, Mr. Speaker, it's one thing that—it's one thing for members of the opposition not to have faith in this Minister of Immigration, but their own government doesn't have faith in the Minister of Immigration. They won't let her stand up and have ministerial responsibility, and that's a key principle in our parliamentary system. She gets paid by the taxpayers, she cashes the cheque of the taxpayers, but she won't answer the question that taxpayers have.

If this government won't let their own minister, who the Premier (Mr. Selinger) appointed in the Cabinet, answer questions, then they should call a

committee, we'll ask the questions of the minister, we'll ask questions of the assistant deputy minister.

Why is it that this own—their own government, every member of that Cabinet, doesn't have faith in their own colleague to let her stand up and answer these questions, Mr. Speaker?

**Ms. Howard:** Well, I can assure this House that this Minister of Immigration (Ms. Melnick) has no problem standing up for Manitobans. In fact, she's been standing up for Manitobans on this issue since the beginning.

And last—and two weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, when the opposition had a chance to stand with Manitobans, is that who they stood with? No. They stood with Ottawa, and Manitobans will remember that.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

**An Honourable Member:** Point of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** Unless you—on a point of order.

#### Point of Order

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

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue that's being brought before the Legislature, and one that the NDP are not taking very seriously. They're not even attempting to, anywhere, address the very serious issue of politicizing the civil service here, which is the focus of our questions to the minister.

The Minister of Immigration herself will not stand up in this House and be accountable and take responsibility for her department. She won't; she's tied to her seat there. They are protecting her for some reason. We're asking the question; she's not standing up, Mr. Speaker. She has a ministerial duty here. She is a minister. She has a duty. She has a responsibility here.

We are asking for accountability, Mr. Speaker. She's paid to do that job. She gets the big office, the name on the door, she's the minister and yet she won't answer questions in this Chamber.

So I would just say, further, that if they're looking for some savings, they can look to that department first and get rid of it—that minister, but, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to a ruling on this point of order.

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

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** On the same point of order.

I mean, first of all, I would say, as you have reminded us many times, points of order are an important thing and they should, frankly, not be used for political smears, Mr. Speaker.

I would say that it's well known, and I'm sure the member opposite knows well, that when it comes to answering questions it is the government's prerogative to decide on who those questions should be answered and how they should be answered. It's a well-established rule and a well-established practice.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Morris, I'm sure members of this Assembly are very familiar with the rules that are in here. And having read through this book, and there is a special section in here that talks about questions that are posed to the government being in a general fashion, and the government chooses which minister will respond to the question that is posed.

So, therefore, I must respectfully rule that there is no point of order.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, but with respect, we need—it's a very serious issue. We need to challenge the ruling.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair has been challenged.

The question before the House, then, is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair—

Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

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

**Voice Vote**

**Mr. Speaker:** All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please signify by saying aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

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

**Formal Vote**

**Mrs. Taillieu:** We'd like a recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** A recorded vote has been requested. Please call in the members.

Order, please. The hour permitted for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I am instructing that they be turned off. We will now proceed to the question before the House.

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

**Division**

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

**Yeas**

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

**Nays**

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

**Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk):** Yeas 34, Nays 20.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** To now resume oral questions.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

*(Continued)*

**Assistant Deputy Minister  
Premier's Apology for Email**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, as the *Free Press* has indicated in its—the editorial on April 28th, the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism (Ms. Melnick) was twice wrong last week.

One of the senior civil servants in her department, Mr. Ben Rempel, sent an email to members of his staff, civil servants, to ask them to participate in a political rally at the Manitoba Legislature. As the *Free Press* has said, this email was coercive. It was wrong that such an email was ever written.

I ask the Premier to acknowledge that this email was wrong, and I ask the Premier to step up and to apologize to those who were invited and, indeed, as well, to all Manitobans for Mr. Rempel's evident abuse of his government's power.

\* (15:20)

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, anybody that was invited to the Legislature was invited to hear the views of all members of the Legislature regardless of their perspective on this issue, which, up until now, has been a non-partisan issue in Manitoba. All Manitobans across all sectors of the community have supported Manitoba having this program in its jurisdiction.

Population growth has been one of the most important sources of economic growth in this province, and the reality is that if we continue to work together in a non-partisan fashion, we can continue to grow the economy by having more people live here than we've seen in the last 40 years. We really don't want to lose that population advantage; 16,000 people came to Manitoba last year, 80 per cent stayed in Manitoba, 83 per cent were employed within three months, and over 80 per cent were homeowners within six years.

**Disciplinary Action for Email**

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, as the *Free Press* has indicated, the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism was twice wrong last week. The second time the minister was wrong was in failing to accept ministerial responsibility for the inappropriate

action of her assistant deputy minister in sending a coercive email to departmental staff asking them to participate in a political rally at the Legislature.

I ask the Premier this: Since his Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism (Ms. Melnick) was twice wrong last week, what disciplinary action has the Premier taken to address the two infractions by his minister?

**Mr. Selinger:** The email in question invited members of the public, including non-profit organizations, to attend to hear public debate on a matter of very important concern to this Legislature and to the people of Manitoba.

The Provincial Nominee Program and the settlement programs have worked together as an integrated whole to generate more people coming to live in Manitoba, to put down roots in Manitoba, to start businesses in Manitoba, to attend schools in Manitoba, and to become citizens of this great country that we know as Canada.

Everybody that came here could hear all perspectives. They could hear the opposition. They could hear the member from River Heights. They could hear members of this side of the House. They could hear the perspective of why newcomers and immigration through an integrated program are so important and so successful in Manitoba—more successful than any other part of the country.

#### **Premier's Knowledge of Email**

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier has failed to acknowledge the seriousness of the two wrongs of the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism and, indeed, has failed to either apologize for these actions of his government or to discipline the minister in any way.

I ask the Premier: Did the Premier or his staff know in advance that the email from Mr. Ben Rempel was to be sent before it was sent?

And I further ask the Premier: Was the reason he failed to discipline the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism due to the fact that it was the Premier or his staff who in fact directed Mr. Rempel to send the email inviting civil servants to come out to a political rally?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the member goes on a witch hunt to look to vilify somebody who, in the course of their duties, invited members of the

community to come down and hear the democratic debate of this Legislature without fear or favour, what the members opposite wish to say, what the member from River Heights wish to say, what the members of this side of the House wish to say about this very important provincial nominee and settlement program, a program that has been the most successful in the country in attracting people to the province, in retaining people in the province, in helping them settle in the province, and helping them take roots in the province and become citizens of this country of Canada.

We have a democracy and people are allowed to participate in it.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for River Heights, on—

**Mr. Gerrard:** On a point of order.

#### **Point of Order**

**Mr. Speaker:** On a point of order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, there has been a long-standing tradition—parliamentary tradition of political independence of the civil servants and of the separation of the civil service from overtly political activities like political rallies at the Manitoba Legislature.

I believe that in failing to recognize this long-standing tradition, the Premier and his government are proceeding in a very irregular way in this House.

I believe that the Premier's failure to acknowledge that it was wrong to engage senior members of the civil service in political activities represents a breach of a long-standing traditional practice which recognizes that engagement of senior members of the civil servants in political activities is inappropriate.

I'm therefore presenting this to you, Mr. Speaker, as a point of order in which a long-standing practice and tradition of this House has been breached.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** I don't believe this is a point of order.

But I would say again, you know, for the record, that inviting people to come to their Legislature to see their representatives talk about issues that they

care about is not a partisan act. It's not a political act; it's a democratic act. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for Morris, on the same point of order.

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader):** Well, yes, Mr. Speaker, the point of the matter is it was the minister that directed them to be invited. That's the issue, corrupting the civil service to do the NDP's bidding in a political way.

You know, engaging the civil service here in something like this is just not something that should be done. It's not democratic, Mr. Speaker. The civil service are here to serve all Manitobans in a non-partisan way, and when the government and the minister corrupt them into doing their political bidding, that is a problem for democracy in this province. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank all honourable members for the advice on the point of order.

But I believe that this is a matter of debate that's currently before the House and, in that sense, it would be something that perhaps should continue through the debate process.

And, therefore, I have to rule that the honourable member does not have a point of order and to allow the debate to continue on any questions or in any of the speeches that members might wish to make on—with regard to this issue.

So, therefore, I must rule there is no point of order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I challenge the ruling.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair has—does the member for River Heights have the support of other members of the Assembly?

Seeing that the member for River Heights does have the support, the ruling of the Chair has been challenged.

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

All those, please—in support of the ruling of the Chair, please—

Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Speaker:** Shall the—all those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please signify it by saying aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

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

#### Formal Vote

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the member for River Heights—support other members of the Assembly?

Seeing that the member for River Heights has support, the ruling of the—recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

Order, please. The hour permitted for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I'm instructing that the bells be turned off, and we'll proceed with the vote. All those in favour—

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

\* (16:30)

#### 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, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.*

#### Nays

*Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Maguire,*

*McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Taillieu, Wishart.*

**Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk):** Yeas 35, Nays 20.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** To resume oral questions.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

*(Continued)*

#### QuickCare Clinics Opening of New Facility

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, this morning in Selkirk I had the honour of attending the opening of the—Manitoba's third QuickCare clinic in Selkirk. The Minister of Health was there, the mayor from Selkirk, health officials and other community leaders. It's very exciting news for our community.

My question is—to the minister is: How will the QuickCare clinics—and I understand this is the third one, Mr. Speaker—help to ensure all Manitobans will have access to a doctor by 2015?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** It was my great honour to be with the member from Selkirk today to open Manitoba's third QuickCare clinic. This is a nurse—*[interjection]*—thank you—this is a nurse-practitioner-led clinic. RNs are working there as well to assist Manitobans in dealing with minor health issues after hours and on the weekend, Mr. Speaker.

We know that not only will our nurse practitioners and nurses assist with the minor issue at hand, but they'll also work with families to ensure that they become connected to family doctors. These clinics will become an integral part of our primary care networks and will help us go forward to ensure that every Manitoban that wants a family doctor will indeed have one, Mr. Speaker, by 2015.

#### Assistant Deputy Minister Minister's Knowledge of Email

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, first, the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism said she saw nothing wrong with the distribution of an email from her ADM directing civil servants to

come down here and do the political bidding of her party for their own political purposes.

Then, Mr. Speaker, what does she turn around and say? Well, she had nothing to do with it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask why this minister isn't standing up, why this minister is being muzzled? Is it because the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the rest of his Cabinet are afraid she'll put yet another position on the public record?

**Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism):** Mr. Speaker, it's really a shame that we're here. This is about the economy of the province of Manitoba. This is not a political partisan issue. It is about continuing to build our economy.

Over a hundred thousand newcomers have come to the province of Manitoba primarily through the Provincial Nominee Program. Over 84 per cent have stayed, Mr. Speaker, because of the settlement services that have been developed over the last 15 years by the Conservative government of the day and the federal Liberal Party of the day, now it's the New Democratic Party here and the Conservative Party in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue. This is about the future of the province. It's very important that we take seriously this discussion and the threats to Manitoba by the removal of settlement services from the—

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

#### Request for Standing Committee

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Mr. Speaker, what is a shame is this minister has corrupted the civil service to do her bidding for her own political purpose. That's what's a shame here.

Mr. Speaker, did this minister direct her ADM to send an email to civil servants asking them to come down and participate in her political party partisanship?

Will the Premier (Mr. Selinger) today call this to committee so we can ask the questions of the minister and the ADM, because this is a very serious issue. Will he do this today?

**Ms. Melnick:** Mr. Speaker, we have—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Ms. Melnick:** Well, members opposite may think this is funny; we take this very seriously. We are not ringing the bells; we are not spending the time out of the Chamber. We want to work on the issues here. And it's by that work that we were able to develop the best settlement services model in the province and in Canada.

We know that the Council of the Federation last year, July 2011, issued in their press release that other jurisdictions wanted to have the Manitoba model. We know that this is brought over a hundred thousand newcomers last year; people from 137 countries. Mr. Speaker, 120 languages being spoken in Winnipeg right now. Except for the chatter of members opposite, that's a—

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

Time for oral questions has expired.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### YMCA-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** Mr. Speaker, every year Manitobans are acknowledged as some of the most charitable in Canada. Volunteerism is high here, higher here than in any other part of the country and my riding is no exception. This year two constituents of mine have been nominated for a YMCA-YWCA woman of distinction award.

Kimberly Reimer of Grunthal is committed to her community. As president of the Green Valley School student council, she set up a social justice committee. She has led efforts for the drilling of wells in Africa by organizing a water relay where students passed buckets of water around the school to raise money for the project. The social justice committee she championed has also been heavily involved in the setting up of the new food bank in Grunthal.

The second young woman is Candace Maxymowich of Vita. Candace has dedicated herself to making others' lives better by volunteering at seniors homes and hospitals, visiting the sick, elderly and infirm. She is known for her activism and commitment to the cause of social justice. Her volunteering activity includes the South-Eastman Regional Health Authority, Local Investment Towards Employment, Amnesty International, Equal Voice, Osteoporosis Canada, Fair Vote, Canadian Liver Foundation, Society for Manitobans with Disabilities, and many others. She is currently

studying psychiatric nursing and business administration.

Kimberly and Candace are just two of thousands of Manitobans who contribute to the vibrancy of their communities in our province each and every day. It would be helpful—it would be helping out a breakfast program at a local school, delivering Meals on Wheels, or coaching recreational sports.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate these two exceptional women and all volunteers of Manitoba for the great work they do in our province.

Thank you.

##### Park City West Wildcats Petites

**Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to offer congratulations to a very successful community team from the northeast—from northeast Winnipeg.

The Park City West Wildcats Petites have had a wonderful ringette season this year, clinching several coveted championships and demonstrating the power of perseverance and teamwork.

The team is made up of thirteen 10- and 11-year-old girls from Transcona's four community clubs: Park City West, Oxford Heights, East End and Southside. They are by far the smallest team in terms of numbers but the largest in enthusiasm and heart.

They operate under the dedicated coaching supervision of father-daughter team, Dennis and Marissa Spitula, along with Breanne Lachance, Dan Lamy, Sherri Melnyk, Greg Spitula, and general manager, Dave Brown.

\* (16:40)

Their successful season, like all good things, started small and grew from there. It began last fall when the girls started playing in the Winnipeg Ringette League. In December, the girls won silver in the River East Ringette Association Christmas tournament but only because they were playing girls from a higher division. They followed this silver medal placement with a clear victory at the Transcona Ringette Association tournament in January, and used that momentum to carry themselves to victory in the Regina tournament where they competed among 14 teams from western Canada. After a 15 to 1 season in the WRL, they entered the city championship tournament as first

seed. In the finals match, on March 10th, they scored 10 seconds into overtime and clinched victory.

Mr. Speaker, Park City West Wildcats Petites finished the season with a record 31 to 3, scoring 184 goals and only giving up 73. They are a balanced team. Every player scored throughout the season and even the goalie had five shutouts. The Petites are an exceptional and well-rounded group of girls. They are not only active and successful in ringette but in so many other activities like dance, piano, hockey, cheerleading, and swimming.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the Chamber to join me in wishing the Park City West Wildcats Petites team continued success in the future. I ask leave to include a list of their names with this statement in *Hansard*.

**An Honourable Member:** Leave.

**Ms. Braun:** No. 1, Danielle Bonot-Schmidt; No. 16, Ainsley Brown; No. 4, Alexandra Ellis; No. 14, Savannah Felix—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I know that I believe leave has been given. Is there leave of the House for the names of the individuals being mentioned by the honourable member for Rossmere to appear in the *Hansard* proceedings of this afternoon? [*Agreed*]

If the member for Rossmere could provide the names—list of names to our *Hansard* folks, that would be helpful.

*Park City West Wildcats Petites: #1 Danielle Bonot-Schmidt, #16 Ainsley Brown, #4 Alexandra Ellis, #14 Savannah Felix, #7 Leah Haklar, #12 Alexis Lamy, #17 Janessa May, #10 Cierra Melnyk, #8 Karly Melville, #3 Aryn Oakley, #6 Jordyn Spitula, #15 Genevieve St. Laurent, #9 Jordan Takenaka.*

#### **David Wiebe**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** I rise in the House today to honour a very dedicated individual in my constituency, Mr. David Wiebe of Altona, who was recently named Citizen of the Year by the Altona district chamber of commerce.

Born and raised in Sommerfeld, Mr. Wiebe has always been dedicated to his community. He worked for Golden West Broadcasting for 41 years, working his way up to become a national vice-president. He has served on numerous boards and committees in

and around Altona, including Altona town council, the Manitoba Sunflower Festival committee, the board of Altona Credit Union, and the Altona Community Development Corporation.

The work he is most proud of, however, is his work with Ebenezer Home. After local churches purchased the facility from the local RHA, Mr. Wiebe and the board got to work constructing larger suites for residents, a meal program, and supervised living, as well as planning for the future expansion of Ebenezer.

One of the most successful initiatives was the creation of a supervised living program that allowed residents of Altona the ability to live independently with minimal supervision, eliminating the need to move into a hospital or a care home facility. There is currently a wait list for that program, and many people in and around Altona view this as a big success in the community and for the province, as this is truly one-of-a-kind venture that has benefited the community and the surrounding area.

His strong sense of civil duty was passed down from his parents but also from his former gold west broadcasting boss, Elmer Hildebrand, who encouraged employees to become part of the community they work in.

Mr. Wiebe is incredibly passionate about the work that goes on in Altona and is very humble when it comes time to give credit for the major project. While he believes that some people who are more deserving than him, I cannot think of anyone better to have an Altona Citizen of the Year, and I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of my constituents, to celebrate and honour his accomplishments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Frontier School Division Art Show**

**Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas):** Mr. Speaker, creative thinkers here in Manitoba are helping young people build the skills and confidence they need to become artists. Frontier School Division, which encompasses much of northern Manitoba, and Graffiti Art Programming, which is located on Higgins Avenue in Winnipeg, have held an annual art show for students since 2001. This year's show ended March 31st.

Beginning today, the Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities (Mr. Chief) will be displaying some of the artwork in his office here at the Legislative Building. I had a chance to see the

artworks this morning, and I was impressed by the skill of these young artists, students from grade 7 to 12 and adult education. The pieces they have created are beautiful and unique.

Graffiti Gallery showcased more than 50 young artists this year. Staff are creating a video tour for those that are not able to come to Winnipeg to see their work on display.

May 1 to 7 is National Youth Arts Week in Canada which gives us a great opportunity to talk about the importance of the arts. Studies continue to show how a meaningful connection to visual arts, dancing, singing and other creative activities helps young people succeed in other areas of their education.

When communities help young people build their strength and confidence, be it through sport, art or other activities, the ripple effect is felt far and wide. These young people become role models for their brothers and sisters, for their friends, and inspire the adults in their lives. In the North, people of all ages face unique challenges but they also possess unique potential.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Frontier School Division students and staff and Graffiti Art Programming for coming together and recognizing the effect art can have on a young person and their community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association**

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association, the MHSAA.

It was founded in April of 1962 in order to provide guidance, policy and structure to high school athletics in the province. From its humble beginnings as a group of individuals dedicated to providing support to schools, it has grown into the main organizing force behind high school sports competition in Manitoba. It now represents 192 member schools, supports over 37,000 young athletes, and puts on 50 different championships every year. In promoting the benefits of participation in high school sport among Manitoba's youth, the MHSAA is providing a valuable and integral service to the province.

Mr. Speaker, participation in high school sports helps our youth develop many skills important to their futures, and I should know, as a past participant

in multiple sports at the high school level. It helps build and foster the teamwork and active living skills that are so important today, and it also teaches self-confidence and the ability to put in the hard work necessary to succeed. It provides a positive environment for youth to grow and express themselves outside of the classroom. Instilling the love of sport into our youth places them firmly on the path toward active healthy lifestyles where they can flourish.

Mr. Speaker, our government has always promoted the benefits of sport for the development of Manitoba's youth. In 2008, physical education became mandatory for the first time in Manitoba's high schools to ensure that students continue to receive access to sport, exercise, and skills training throughout their high school education to grade 12. The five-year \$50-million Active Schools Fund established last spring will provide important infrastructure support to increase access for youth to sport in our schools. Construction and renovation projects are currently in development or under way for gymnasiums in 14 Manitoba schools across the province, and since 2000, our government has built 27 new gyms and five gym additions, the equivalent of adding 170,000 square feet of gymnasium space to schools across our province.

Mr. Speaker, participation in high school sport is a rite of passage for our youth. It teaches so many skills and affords so many life lessons that any organization that promotes it should be commended. For the past 50 years the Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association has stood out for its active and able promotion and advocacy of high school sport in Manitoba.

I'd like to ask all of my fellow members of the Manitoba Legislature to join me in congratulating them on 50 successful years and wish them continued success into the future.

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

#### **Point of Order**

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

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm referring to *Beauchesne*, No. 64, reflection on

members, and the House has occasionally taken notice of attacks on individual members according to the—this section 64 in *Beauchesne*.

Mr. Speaker, I think there—during the question from the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) as he was trying to pose his question to the government, I distinctly heard the member from Dawson Trail make an—a remark against the member for River Heights and he said—he referred to him as the member living on the grassy knoll.

So, Mr. Speaker, when these kinds of remarks are made against people that are members in this statement—in this Chamber, it is something that is—rightfully so, in the rule books under *Beauchesne*, rule 64, that it is a reflection on members and it also could be a point raised under item 52(2) from our own rule book which says disrespectful or offensive language against the House or against any member. And I can remember other instances in this Chamber where one member decided that he would use a rude gesture to another member, and that created quite a considerable point of order in this Chamber, and I think these things are very serious.

\* (16:50)

Other things that have been said, Mr. Speaker, when members have risen—other things that have been said against members have been taken quite seriously, and I think it's very, very serious when we're all in this Chamber and members make these kinds of statements against other members.

So I would ask, Mr. Speaker, for a ruling on this, because I think it is a very serious issue and—so thank you very much.

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

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I trust your ability to rule on this point of order. I don't believe it is one, and we will respect your ruling.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the honourable members for advice. I did not hear the comments that had been indicated to have been made by a member of this Assembly. Therefore, I'm going to take this matter under advisement and reflect on the printing of *Hansard*, and perhaps the recordings of this proceeding, if necessary, and then bring back a ruling to the House.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Yes, on another point of order, Mr. Speaker.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable member for Morris, on a new point of order.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Mr. Speaker, the usual practice of the House is when questions are put to a minister, the minister will stand in his or her place and answer the questions. Well, today we notice that, even though questions were directed to a particular minister, another minister fielded all of the questions, and the interesting part about that is when you ask questions of one minister and you're getting answers from another, how carefully can those answers be crafted by that particular person answering the question, because we ask these questions in a very, very serious matter and we expect that we will get some serious answers back?

And I know you've ruled in the past that, yes, ministers have the right to answer or not answer the question, but it is a very serious issue before us, and when you ask questions of one minister and get answers from another, that is really hindering our ability to look seriously at these answers and take these out to Manitobans. And many Manitobans out there are watching this issue because they are very concerned about what is going on and what this minister has done—what this minister has done and why she will not answer to what she has done.

When the questions are put and the answers are not given, Mr. Speaker, it's definitely a point, and I look forward to your ruling on that.

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

**Ms. Howard:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I believe you have ruled previously on this point of order, and I can assure the opposition that any minister on this side of the House can handle any question that side of the House [*inaudible*] So we will respect your ruling on this.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for River Heights, on the same point of order.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, what is particularly concerning about what has happened here is that we have had a really egregious breach of the normal

practice; that is to say, that we have had a civil servant, right, getting involved in the political process by inviting members of the staff, other organizations, to participate in a rally at the Legislature, which was very clearly a political rally. And the problem has been this is that the minister who has been responsible, the minister who is responsible for the department where this particular deputy minister, Mr. Ben Rempel—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Dealing with the point of order and the advice that the member is providing to the Chair, I would appreciate if the member could reference a particular rule that may have been broken or breached so that we might make a ruling in that regard. It appears that the—and, with the greatest respect to the member for River Heights, it appears that he is moving into the area of debate on this matter, so I caution him and ask him to perhaps reflect on which rule may have been breached as a part of our proceedings here today.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, what I did was to get up to support the point of order that was brought by the MLA from Morris. And there has been a parliamentary tradition of ministerial accountability, and, in this case, one of the problems has been the absence of ministerial accountability, and a point of order is appropriate when there is a breach of traditional practice. And, in this case, the traditional practice is ministerial accountability and that a minister is accountable for the actions that are taken by members of her department and have some responsibility.

And, in particular, in this instance, where what we're dealing with is a situation of a minister under the responsibility of this minister, there has been a civil servant who has engaged in political—a process and in the civil service—civil servant indirectly inviting members of the civil service to participate in a political activity, you know, has contravened the normal tradition of a non-partisan civil service, and where we have a particular problem here, or where I have a particular problem is that there has been a lack of ministerial accountability, that the minister on this occasion has apparently said some things outside but has not said them here in terms of whether or not she is responsible for directing this assistant deputy minister.

And it's very important that there be accountability in this Chamber. And this principle of accountability—of ministerial accountability in this instance, I believe, has been breached to the extent

that there is a significant issue here, and that the problem is that the minister, instead of accepting the ministerial accountability, instead of giving an answer—right?—in this Chamber as to whether or not she sent this, or she directed this email to be sent, that she has avoided the accountability, that she has failed to stand up and speak up, and, when she has stood up and spoken up, she has avoided being accountable for what has gone on in her department.

Mr. Speaker, it could be as simple as apologizing for the mistake that she made. But, certainly, there should be some accountability here, and the minister needs to be held to account. This is a fundamental tradition that we have within the Chamber—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I regret having to caution the honourable member again, but he is wandering into the area of debating the matter of the point of order versus reciting the rule or getting advice on which rule has been breached for the Assembly.

So I ask the honourable member, please conclude your remarks, sticking strictly to the relevant matters dealing with the point of order and the breach of the rules.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for your clarification. I will certainly endeavour to do the best I can to clarify this matter and make sure that we're looking—a point of order comes up because you have a breach of a standard practice that has been used for many, many years and is a very important part of the democratic process, the democratic process here in this Legislature and the democratic process, indeed, in other chambers, not only in other provinces but in the federal Parliament in Ottawa, in the Parliament in London, and that it's very important that we stand up and recognize these traditions, that we recognize when they are breached, and that we are able to bring these forward as a particular point of order.

\* (17:00)

And, in this case, as I've been trying to explain, that the problem is this tradition which goes back not just a year or two, but goes back not just a decade or two, but it—not just a century, but is a very long-standing parliamentary tradition, and that because this is a very long-standing parliamentary tradition and because we have been here in this Chamber and we're concerned about the breach of parliamentary condition—tradition which speaks

about the importance of ministerial accountability, that the fact is that this is a relevant and important point of order.

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

I thank all honourable members for their advice on this point of order. I'm going to take this matter

under advisement and report back to the House with a ruling on this.

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**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 30, 2012

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