

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

Tuesday, June 12, 2012

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

**Personal Care Homes and Long-Term
Care—Steinbach**

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

And these are the reasons for the petition:

The city of Steinbach is one of the fastest growing communities in Manitoba and one of the largest cities in the province.

This growth has resulted in pressure on a number of important services, including personal care homes and long-term care space in the city.

Many long-time residents of the city of Steinbach have been forced to live out their final years outside of Steinbach because of the shortage of personal care homes and long-term care facilities.

Individuals who have lived in, worked in, and contributed to the city of Steinbach their entire lives should not be forced to spend their final years in a place far from friends and from family.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health ensure additional personal care homes and long-term care spaces are made available in the city of Steinbach on a priority basis.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by J. Reimer, C.R. Plett, E. Loeppky and thousands of other Manitobans.

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

PTH 16 and PTH 5 North—Traffic Signals

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The junctions of PTH 16 and PTH 5 north is an increasingly busy intersection which is used by motorists and pedestrians alike.

The Town of Neepawa has raised concerns with the Highway Traffic Board about safety levels at this intersection.

The Town of Neepawa has also passed a resolution requesting that Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation install traffic lights at this intersection in order to increase safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider making the installation of traffic lights at the intersection of PTH 16 and PTH 5 north a priority project in order to help protect the safety of the motorists and pedestrians who use it.

This petition is signed by D. Bell, D. Freeman, R. Brandson and many, many other fine Manitobans.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee of Supply

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered and adopted certain resolutions.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Any further committee reports?

**Standing Committee on Human Resources
Third Report**

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Human Resources—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on HUMAN RESOURCES presents the following as its Third Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on June 11, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 6)** – *The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Improved Fiscal Responsibility and Community Involvement)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les offices régionaux de la santé (accroissement de la responsabilité financière et de la participation communautaire)*
- **Bill (No. 8)** – *The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Use of Child Safety Seats)/Loi modifiant le Code de la route (utilisation de sièges de sécurité pour enfants)*
- **Bill (No. 23)** – *The Local Government Statutes Amendment Act/Loi modifiant certaines lois d'administration locale*
- **Bill (No. 33)** – *The Election Financing Act and Elections Amendment Act/Loi sur le financement des élections et Loi modifiant la Loi électorale*
- **Bill (No. 34)** – *The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act/Loi sur la transparence et la responsabilité en matière de partenariats public-privé*
- **Bill (No. 35)** – *The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail*
- **Bill (No. 37)** – *The Highway Traffic Amendment and Summary Convictions Amendment Act (Bicycle Helmets)/Loi modifiant le Code de la route et la Loi sur les poursuites sommaires (casques de bicyclettes)*

Committee Membership

- Mr. BRIESE
- Mrs. DRIEDGER
- Hon. Ms. HOWARD
- Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX
- Hon. Ms. OSWALD
- Hon. Mr. RONDEAU
- Mr. SARAN (VICE-CHAIR)
- Mrs. STEFANSON

- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Mrs. TAILLIEU
- Mr. WIEBE (CHAIR)

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following four presentations on **Bill (No. 6)** – *The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Improved Fiscal Responsibility and Community Involvement)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les offices régionaux de la santé (accroissement de la responsabilité financière et de la participation communautaire)*:

John Friesen, Eden Mental Health Centre

Gerald Pronyk, Chair, MARCHE - Manitoba Association of Residential & Community Care Homes for the Elderly

Julie Turenne-Maynard, Chair, IHCAM - Interfaith Health Care Association of Manitoba

Daniel Lussier, Chair, CHAM - Catholic Health Association of Manitoba

Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 8)** – *The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Use of Child Safety Seats)/Loi modifiant le Code de la route (utilisation de sièges de sécurité pour enfants)*:

Dr. Lynne Warda, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority – Injury Prevention Program

Your Committee heard the following two presentations on **Bill (No. 23)** – *The Local Government Statutes Amendment Act/Loi modifiant certaines lois d'administration locale*:

Doug Dobrowolski, President, Association of Manitoba Municipalities

G. Henry Holowchak, Private Citizen

Your Committee heard the following two presentations on **Bill (No. 33)** – *The Election Financing Act and Elections Amendment Act/Loi sur le financement des élections et Loi modifiant la Loi électorale*:

Roy McPhail, Private Citizen

James Beddome, Green Party of Manitoba

Your Committee heard the following seven presentations on **Bill (No. 34)** – *The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act/Loi sur la transparence et la responsabilité en matière de partenariats public-privé*:

Russ Wyatt and Jeff Browaty, Councillors (by leave),
City of Winnipeg

Chris Lorenc, President, Manitoba Heavy
Construction Association

Lynne Fernandez, Canadian Centre for Policy
Alternatives

Chuck Davidson, Vice President, Winnipeg Chamber
of Commerce

John Loxley, Private Citizen

David Sauer, Winnipeg Labour Council & Manitoba
Federation of Labour

Councillor Ross Eadie, City Councillor for the
Mynarski Ward

Your Committee heard the following two
presentations on **Bill (No. 35) – The Retail
Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act/Loi
modifiant la Loi sur les jours fériés dans le
commerce de détail:**

Lanny McInnes, Retail Council of Canada

Chuck Davidson, Vice President, Winnipeg Chamber
of Commerce

Your Committee heard the following two
presentations on **Bill (No. 37) – The Highway Traffic
Amendment and Summary Convictions Amendment
Act (Bicycle Helmets)/Loi modifiant le Code de la
route et la Loi sur les poursuites sommaires (casques
de bicyclettes):**

Dr. Lynne Warda, Winnipeg Regional Health
Authority – Injury Prevention Program

James Beddome, Green Party of Manitoba

Written Submissions

Your Committee received the following written
submission on **Bill (No. 6) – The Regional Health
Authorities Amendment Act (Improved Fiscal
Responsibility and Community Involvement)/Loi
modifiant la Loi sur les offices régionaux de la santé
(accroissement de la responsabilité financière et de
la participation communautaire):**

Doug Dobrowolski, President, Association of
Manitoba Municipalities

Your Committee received the following two written
submissions on **Bill (No. 34) – The Public-Private
Partnerships Transparency and Accountability
Act/Loi sur la transparence et la responsabilité en
matière de partenariats public-privé:**

Doug Dobrowolski, President, Association of
Manitoba Municipalities

Barry Brown, Maple Leaf Construction

Your Committee received the following written
submission on **Bill (No. 35) – The Retail Businesses
Holiday Closing Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la
Loi sur les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail:**

Doug Dobrowolski, President, Association of
Manitoba Municipalities

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 6) – The Regional Health Authorities
Amendment Act (Improved Fiscal Responsibility
and Community Involvement)/Loi modifiant la
Loi sur les offices régionaux de la santé
(accroissement de la responsabilité financière et
de la participation communautaire)**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without
amendment.

- **Bill (No. 8) – The Highway Traffic Amendment
Act (Use of Child Safety Seats)/Loi modifiant le
Code de la route (utilisation de sièges de
sécurité pour enfants)**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without
amendment.

- **Bill (No. 23) – The Local Government Statutes
Amendment Act/Loi modifiant certaines lois
d'administration locale**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without
amendment.

- **Bill (No. 33) – The Election Financing Act and
Elections Amendment Act/Loi sur le financement
des élections et Loi modifiant la Loi électorale**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without
amendment.

- **Bill (No. 34) – The Public-Private Partnerships
Transparency and Accountability Act/Loi sur la
transparence et la responsabilité en matière de
partenariats public-privé**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without
amendment.

- **Bill (No. 35) – The Retail Businesses Holiday
Closing Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur
les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 37)** – *The Highway Traffic Amendment and Summary Convictions Amendment Act (Bicycle Helmets)/Loi modifiant le Code de la route et la Loi sur les poursuites sommaires (casques de bicyclettes)*

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

THAT the proposed clause 145.0.1(7)(b), as set out in Clause 2 of the Bill, be amended in by striking out "stay the proceeding" and substituting "dismiss the prosecution".

Mr. Wiebe: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Saran), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Private Bills First Report

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Chairperson): I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

Madam Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Private Bills—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on PRIVATE BILLS presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on June 11, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 208)** – *The Remembrance Day Awareness Act and Amendments to The Public Schools Act/Loi sur la sensibilisation au jour du Souvenir et modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques*
- **Bill (No. 212)** – *The Apprenticeship Recognition Act/Loi sur la reconnaissance de l'apprentissage*
- **Bill (No. 300)** – *The Jewish Child and Family Service Incorporation Act/Loi constituant en corporation le Jewish Child and Family Service*

- **Bill (No. 301)** – *The Young Men's Christian Association of Brandon Incorporation Amendment Act/ Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation «The Young Men's Christian Association of Brandon»*

Committee Membership

- Ms. BLADY
- Mr. CALDWELL
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. EWASKO
- Mr. GAUDREAU
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Mr. MARCELINO
- Mr. SMOOK
- Mrs. STEFANSON
- Hon. Mr. SWAN
- Ms. WIGHT

Your Committee elected Mr. Marcelino as the Chairperson.

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

Motions

Your Committee agreed to the following motion:

- That this committee recommends that the fees paid with respect to Bill (No. 301) – *The Young Men's Christian Association of Brandon Incorporation Amendment Act/ Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation «The Young Men's Christian Association of Brandon», be refunded, less the cost of printing.*

Public Presentations

- Your Committee heard the following two presentations on **Bill (No. 212)** – *The Apprenticeship Recognition Act/Loi sur la reconnaissance de l'apprentissage:*

Tanya Jakob, Apprenticeship Manitoba

John Bobbette, President, Winnipeg Technical College

- Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 300)** – *The Jewish Child and Family Service Incorporation Act/Loi constituant en corporation le Jewish Child and Family Service:*

Heather Leonoff, President, Jewish Child and Family Services

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 208)** – *The Remembrance Day Awareness Act and Amendments to The Public Schools Act/Loi sur la sensibilisation au jour du Souvenir et modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 212)** – *The Apprenticeship Recognition Act/Loi sur la reconnaissance de l'apprentissage*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 300)** – *The Jewish Child and Family Service Incorporation Act/ Loi constituant en corporation le Jewish Child and Family Service*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 301)** – *The Young Men's Christian Association of Brandon Incorporation Amendment Act/ Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation «The Young Men's Christian Association of Brandon»*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Marcelino: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Social and
Economic Development
Third Report**

Ms. Erna Braun (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

Madam Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

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

Meetings

Your Committee met on June 11, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 7)** – *The Community Renewal Act/Loi sur la revalorisation des collectivités*
- **Bill (No. 21)** – *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Code of Conduct for School Trustees)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (code de conduite à l'intention des commissaires d'écoles)*
- **Bill (No. 24)** – *The Energy Savings Act/Loi sur les économies d'énergie*
- **Bill (No. 25)** – *The Groundwater and Water Well and Related Amendments Act/Loi sur les eaux souterraines et les puits et modifications connexes*
- **Bill (No. 29)** – *The Contaminated Sites Remediation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assainissement des lieux contaminés*
- **Bill (No. 38)** – *The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2012/Loi corrective de 2012*

Committee Membership

- *Hon. Ms. ALLAN*
- *Mr. ALLUM*
- *Mr. ALTEMEYER*
- *Ms. BRAUN*
- *Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK*
- *Mr. FRIESEN*
- *Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS*
- *Hon. Mr. MACKINTOSH*
- *Mr. MAGUIRE*
- *Mrs. ROWAT*
- *Mr. WISHART*

Your Committee elected Ms. BRAUN as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mr. ALLUM as the Vice-Chairperson.

Public Presentations

*Your Committee heard the following three presentations on **Bill (No. 7)** – *The Community Renewal Act/Loi sur la revalorisation des collectivités:**

Leslie Allen, Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation

Brent Mitchell, Private Citizen

Kirsten Bernas, The Canadian CED Network

Your Committee heard the following two presentations on **Bill (No. 21)** – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Code of Conduct for School Trustees)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (code de conduite à l'intention des commissaires d'écoles):

Hugh Coburn, The Manitoba School Boards Association

Edward Lipsett, Manitoba Association for Rights & Liberties

Your Committee heard the following twelve presentations on **Bill (No. 24)** – The Energy Savings Act/Loi sur les économies d'énergie:

Tim Sale, Private Citizen

Ron Robins, President, Manitoba Geothermal Energy Alliance

Gloria Desorcy, The Consumers Association of Canada – Manitoba Branch

Tyler Pearce, Director of Operations, BUILD

Kirsten Bernas, The Canadian CED Network

Maeengan Linklater, Private Citizen

Gorden McIntyre, Winnipeg Rental Network

Glen Koroluk, Daniel McIntyre St. Matthews Association

James Beddome, Leader, Green Party of Manitoba

Gail Whelan-Enns, Manitoba Wildlands

Peter Miller, Green Action Centre

Lucas Stewart, Manitoba Green Retrofit

Your Committee heard the seven presentations on **Bill (No. 25)** – The Groundwater and Water Well and Related Amendments Act/Loi sur les eaux souterraines et les puits et modifications connexes:

Jeff Bell, President, Manitoba Waterwell Association

Dr. L. James Shapiro, Private Citizen

Gail Whelan-Enns, Manitoba Wildlands

Mike Sutherland, Councillor, Peguis First Nations

Georgina Jarema, St. Germain/Vermette Community Association

Caitlin McIntyre, Private Citizen

James Beddome, Leader, Green Party of Manitoba

Written Submissions

Your Committee received the following written submission on **Bill (No. 24)** – The Energy Savings Act/Loi sur les économies d'énergie:

Clifford Maynes, Green Communities Canada

Your Committee received the following written submission on **Bill (No. 29)** – The Contaminated Sites Remediation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assainissement des lieux contaminés:

Doug Dobrowolski, Association of Manitoba Municipalities

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 7)** – The Community Renewal Act/Loi sur la revalorisation des collectivités

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 21)** – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Code of Conduct for School Trustees)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (code de conduite à l'intention des commissaires d'écoles)

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

THAT Clause 2 of the Bill be amended by adding the following after the proposed subsection 35.2(3):

Effect on indemnity

35.2(4) For certainty, in a by-law passed under subsection 56(1) a board may specify that the annual indemnity payable under that provision may be reduced as a result of a trustee being sanctioned under item 3 of subsection (1).

- **Bill (No. 24)** – The Energy Savings Act/Loi sur les économies d'énergie

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

THAT Clause 5(1)(a)(iii) of the Bill be amended by striking out "other than natural gas".

THAT Clause 9(2)(b) of the Bill be amended by striking out "other than natural gas".

THAT the proposed subsection 125(5), as set out in Clause 17(5) of the Bill, be amended by striking out everything after "power for the building".

- **Bill (No. 25)** – *The Groundwater and Water Well and Related Amendments Act/Loi sur les eaux souterraines et les puits et modifications connexes*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 29)** – *The Contaminated Sites Remediation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assainissement des lieux contaminés*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 38)** – *The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2012/Loi corrective de 2012*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Ms. Braun: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I wish to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Garven Wheeler from Lethbridge, Alberta. This individual is the guest of the honourable Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson).

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here today.

And also in the public gallery, from Christ the King School, we have 27 grade 4 students under the direction of Ms. Melissa Kwasny. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Education (Ms. Allan).

And also in the public gallery, we have with us today from King Edward Community School 27 grade 5 students under the direction of Mr. Paul Vernaus. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities (Mr. Chief).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Health-Care Services Government Record

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this Premier's list of broken promises continues to grow longer with every passing day.

Mr. Speaker, this is a Premier who promised Manitobans in the election campaign that he would balance the budget without raising taxes. He then turned around and imposed a \$184-million tax increase on Manitobans.

It's a Premier who said during the election that they were ahead of schedule on reducing the deficit, only to reveal afterward, Mr. Speaker, that, in fact, they were behind schedule on reducing the deficit.

This is a Premier who put in place an unelected 58th taxpayer-funded MLA after the election at the same time as he was planning to increase taxes on Manitobans.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, 30 members of his caucus voted that they were above the law, sending a message to Manitobans that the law doesn't apply to them.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier also made a promise during the election campaign and—that his top commitment was to improve health care by bringing better care closer to home. And he went on to say, and I quote, this is my contract with Manitobans.

Can the Premier indicate that this contract on health care was written in invisible ink just like the rest of his promises, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. He had a long preamble full of aspersions, which is a word you've so far accepted in the House, and we appreciate that.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, that we've actually moved very quickly on some of the key commitments we've made. CancerCare hubs have

been initiated in Manitoba, and the minister and I were out to announce one even before Christmastime. QuickCare clinics have been brought into play; we're moving on that promise. Free cancer care drugs, oral cancer care drugs, to allow people to stay close to home and outside of hospital facilities as long as possible.

Those are just some of the examples we've followed up since the election and promises we made before the election that we've carried out, Mr. Speaker.

* (13:40)

Personal Care Homes Admissions Wait-List

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, Mr. Speaker, after breaking the promise on taxes, after breaking their promise to farmers and to seniors, after saying that the deficit of—was ahead of schedule, after misusing the civil service for political purposes, this Premier made a commitment to Manitobans and he said, and I quote, we'll improve health care by bringing better care closer to home. He went on to say that, this is my contract with Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, just to give Manitobans a picture as to what this Premier means when he says he's got a contract with Manitobans, the first budget he brought in contained a cut to long-term care services and a cut to home care services as outlined in the supplemental health-care Estimates, a cut of over \$15 million to long-term care services and a cut of \$1.6 million to home care services. And the result is that we now have the longest wait-list, the most number of Manitobans waiting for placement in PCHs in some time.

Can the Premier just acknowledge that he had no intention of keeping that promise to Manitobans?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we have moved forward with a \$200-million pre-election commitment to additional resources for personal care homes in Manitoba. There is a need for health-care facilities for the elderly across the entire spectrum. Assisted living was not actually provided for until we came along and put resources in place for that. We have built on Canada's best home care program. We've made additional commitments there, including additional resources for people that are more seriously in need of help to have additional support during the day in their homes. We have taken those measures.

We will continue to build more PCHs in Manitoba as the planning process goes forward and we roll out the capital budget. There's a long road of important services that are provided in Manitoba. There's more that we can do, and we have the resources and the commitment to do it. We will be following up on those commitments, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the reality is this: the Premier made a commitment to the people of Manitoba in the campaign. He said, and I quote, this is my contract with Manitobans.

And then what we have is a situation where, as of a year ago, there were fewer than 400 people in Winnipeg waiting for placement in personal care homes. That number, as just disclosed by the Department of Health, is now up to 480 people in the city of Winnipeg and their families waiting for placement in personal care homes. And the total for across the province is now 1,383 Manitobans on the wait-list for PCH beds, and those are just the Manitobans who have been panelled. There are hundreds of other Manitoba families who are waiting, seniors who are waiting.

Mr. Speaker, the actions of this government are a slap in the face to seniors and to families in Manitoba and a breach of the promise that he made. Will he today apologize?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we made—unlike the members opposite, we made a commitment to additional personal home care beds in the province of Manitoba. The Leader of the Opposition will recall that all members of his caucus, including himself, voted to cut a half a billion dollars out of the budget, which would have had a very dramatic impact on not only home care and PCHs but health care as well as other services in Manitoba.

We did not do that; we kept that money in the budget. We provided those core services to Manitobans. We, in this budget, have protected health care in terms of front-line services at the same time as we are expanding the number of PCH beds in this province, at the same time as we're expanding our home care resources in this province, at the same time as we're expanding assisted-living and supported-living resources in this province. Those measures are being taken as we move forward.

And I can tell the member opposite, if his half-a-billion-dollar cut would have gone through, there would be much more dire consequences for the

people needing health care in this province, including the elderly, Mr. Speaker.

Personal Care Homes Admissions Wait-Lists

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, sadly, this Premier doesn't know what he's talking about.

Mr. Speaker, with growing alarm, we've been watching the numbers of panelled patients waiting for a personal care home bed rise in Winnipeg. These numbers are worse than they were in 2010, when the WRHA went into crisis mode and put in place a moratorium.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to tell us why, despite all her rhetoric, these numbers are getting worse under her watch.

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): We have acknowledged that we need to build our capacity for personal care home beds in the province of Manitoba. It's why we, last February, announced a \$200-million fund wherein more personal care home beds are going to be constructed while at the same time, Mr. Speaker, expanding, broadening, deepening home care that we provide, because, ultimately, seniors want to stay in their homes with their loved ones just as long as they can. We're also providing more supportive housing. So we want to add additional beds across the system to provide a variety of options.

And interestingly, this same member, back in 2001, called the debedding of our health-care system a good thing.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, this minister's spin is making all of us pretty dizzy over here.

Mr. Speaker, in Winnipeg we've got a hundred elderly people stuck in hospitals waiting for a personal care home bed. Almost 400 are stuck in the community waiting to be admitted to a personal care home bed. These are the worst numbers we've seen in years. So the minister's spin isn't matching what's happening on the ground.

So I'd like to ask her: Why does she continue to mislead the public about this very, very critical problem? Why is she trying to cover up the truth about what's happening in our waits for personal care home beds in this province?

Ms. Oswald: Well, Mr. Speaker, what's true is that we tasked the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, an

independent, very well-respected agency, to do an analysis of our needs across Manitoba, and what they clearly said was that we needed to have more personal care home bed capacity. We agree. That's why we are investing \$200 million to expand, with work already under way at Holy Family here in Winnipeg, on a personal care home in Lac du Bonnet. We know that many members across the way are asking for personal care home beds, and we're listening carefully through our regional health authorities.

But, Mr. Speaker, isn't it ironic that this same member is part of the party that, during the 1990s during an economic downturn, made an initial decision to freeze all health capital expenditures? Wow, that's hypocritical.

Long-Term Care Services Budget Decrease

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, sadly, this Minister of Health lacks credibility. She wouldn't even go out in the hallway yesterday to speak to a family whose mother died. Instead, she snuck out another door instead of facing the family.

Mr. Speaker, there are almost 1,400 patients in total waiting for a personal care home bed. We're hearing horror stories about this every day.

In the election, the NDP promised more personal care home beds and more home care services. After the election, this Minister of Health cut their budgets almost by \$17 million.

So I'd like to ask this Minister of Health to tell our seniors: Why did she cut that funding to home care and for long-term care in this province? Why is she misleading the public and then turning around and doing the opposite of what she said in the election?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): We're doing more home care, not less. We're doing more long-term care, not less.

As I explained to the member during Committee of Supply, our acute-care budget has increased substantially because our focus is going to be on improving the discharge process, where I know we need more work, Mr. Speaker. Further, we're also investing in hospital home teams, or the virtual ward that was featured in the *Free Press*, because we know that that's exactly what our patients want.

Mr. Speaker, if we want to talk about credibility problems, let's talk about these words escaping the lips of the person that wanted to privatize home care and freeze health capital infrastructure. Shame on her.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the loge to my right where we have Mr. Doug Martindale, the former member for Burrows.

And also, while I'm on my feet, I want to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have from the Immigrant Centre 20 adult English language students under the direction of Ms. Denise Payment. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Ms. Marcelino).

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here today.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Tuxedo, I believe, next question.

Bill 34 Lack of Consultations

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, there are many P3 projects in Manitoba that have gained national and international recognition for their ability to complete infrastructure projects in this province on budget and on time.

* (13:50)

Last night at committee, we heard from many members of the public express their concern about the lack of consultation on the P3 bill, 34.

Why did the government refuse to consult important stakeholders such as the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association and many others so they could provide input into the bill?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I thought that was a very good discussion last night. There were a number of presenters who spoke well of P3s, and I think there are good examples of P3s that have worked here in Manitoba and in other jurisdictions. We heard from a group of people who raised some alarm bells about P3s as well; they deserved to be heard as well. I

think all present heard and listened and, I think, learned a lot about P3s.

But I think, essentially, what we learned was that it would be irresponsible for government not to move ahead and deal with issues of transparency and accountability when it comes to P3s, not the least of which we need to be concerned about getting the best value for the taxpayers' dollars in Manitoba.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, what's irresponsible is that this government has only consulted some stakeholders in the community, which happen to be their friends, and not all stakers who are affected by this bill.

It's clear that Bill 34 is a deliberate attempt to eliminate P3s in the city of Winnipeg in order to support the NDP's union-boss base who all clearly—who are clearly opposed to P3s. The MFL and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, well-known supporters of the NDP, were in favour of the bill and seem content that this legislation will effectively put a nail in the coffin of P3s in our city.

Will the NDP government admit that they did not concern themselves with seeking input from the rest of the stakeholders because they were more concerned about pandering to their union-boss buddies?

Mr. Struthers: I'm sure that—I'm sure the people that we met with from the City of Winnipeg won't be pleased with being referred to as the union bosses of the NDP.

And I'm also pretty sure—I'm almost very sure that Stephen Harper isn't going to like the reference of being a union boss to us either, because they, at the federal level, have put in place a framework that deals with the transparency and accountability and value for money that P3s can bring to the table. We learned a lot in dealing with the federal government and their P3 framework and tried our best to make sure that we reflected many of those principles in the legislation that we brought forward here this session.

So I'll take the word of the people who consulted on our behalf with those folks over the member for Tuxedo any day.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, public-private partnerships are a valuable tool to help build the infrastructure needed in Manitoba's future. P3s give cost certainty to governments so they can better plan for the future. P3s also have a strong track record of being completed on time and on budget.

Why was there a lack of consultation that took place with so many important stakeholders in the community?

Will the Minister of Finance agree to pull this bill today until proper consultation has taken place with the representatives of all stakeholders affected by the legislation, rather than just a few of their own union-boss supporters?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the citizens of Manitoba, the people who put the tax dollars forward to put together projects of infrastructure, transportation, all of those kind of projects that's so important to Manitobans, on behalf of those people, we'll take a much broader view than the narrow focus of members opposite.

We will be, and we will continue to be, committed to transparency, to accountability. We'll be—we worked in an element of public consultation; I don't know what members have against consulting with the public on these kind of issues. We'll take that broad approach to make sure that this legislation and this P3 concept is transparent and accountable. I'd suggest that they do the same.

Child Welfare System Report Recommendations Availability

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): The Minister of Family Services has received the recommendations from the investigation into the horrendous death of a four-year-old girl who was beaten and died at the hands of her mother. She was moved from a foster home into this unsafe situation by this minister's child and family services system.

I'd like to ask the minister, Mr. Speaker, whether she would make public all of the recommendations from this investigation. Will she table them in the House today?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I think, you know, as I've said before, the deaths of children in care or who have been in care is one of the tragedies that's very difficult to deal with in this job. I know it was difficult for the member asking the questions to deal with in her time as minister of Family Services.

We put in place a system whereby the Children's Advocate has the power to investigate these deaths. She issues a special investigation review that goes to the authorities and agencies who are accountable for those recommendations. It also goes to the

Ombudsman. The Ombudsman reports annually on the status of those recommendations.

I cannot make things public that compromise the confidentiality of a child who is in care or who has been in care. I can assure the member that these recommendations pertain to things like training, pertain to things like working with other jurisdictions to ensure there's a protocol that information is being shared. Those recommendations are being worked on.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But the recommendations from the Phoenix Sinclair investigation were made public. The investigations from the death of Gage Guimond—the investigation and the recommendations, Mr. Speaker, were made public. Since then we have not seen any release publicly of any recommendations that have been made under any investigation.

Mr. Speaker, if we could release—if the government could release the recommendations on those two deaths, what are they hiding from? Where's the accountability? Why can't they release all of the recommendations now?

Ms. Howard: I think we have strengthened the accountability measures by putting in place—you know, previously there was a review by the medical examiner. The medical examiner still has the power to call an inquest in this case or other case. I think we strengthened it by involving the Children's Advocate in that review and putting in place another measure whereby the Ombudsman reviews it.

That being said, I am completely prepared to sit down with the Children's Advocate, who issues these reports, discuss with her a way that we could in the future make recommendations more public in a way that makes sure that the confidentiality of the children involved is protected, in a way that makes sure that those agencies and authorities who the recommendations are issued to, and other organizations, that they also have an opportunity to respond so we know what the status of those recommendations are. But we will look at a more regular protocol of making those recommendations more public and ensuring there's accountability.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But that's not good enough. That's not good enough for the children that have died under this minister's watch. That's not good enough for the public that deserves some answers to what went so terribly wrong.

Mr. Speaker, 200 recommendations or more were made in 2005 or 2006 after the death of Phoenix Sinclair. Why won't this government be open and accountable and share with us the recommendations from the latest reports so that we know what recommendations were implemented from the Phoenix Sinclair report and which ones still need to be acted upon? Is the planning for children when they're moved into unsafe situations improving or is it still rampant within the system?

Ms. Howard: Certainly, we believe there have been improvements within the system. We know that at the most recent committee where the Children's Advocate came to speak, she noted that there have been improvements in things like training. We do still have many improvements to make.

I have committed to working with the Children's Advocate on a protocol that we can make recommendations public, but we're only going to do that in a way that doesn't compromise the confidentiality of the children involved, and I'm not going to do anything that may compromise a future criminal investigation or prosecution when children are killed.

*(14:00)

So we will—we do want to be accountable. We do think the public should understand what's happening to improve the child welfare system, but we have to move carefully in this situation so we don't do more damage to the memories of those children that we're seeking to honour.

Flooding (Lake Manitoba) Multi-Year Financial Compensation Programs

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, the negative effects of the 2011 flood still linger for those around Lake Manitoba. A number of businesses, be they farms or others, are still in the recovery mode and their operations won't be fully restored for some time yet.

Last year, in a CBC radio interview, the then-Agriculture minister was asked whether his government would run flood programs over multiple years if needed. The minister stated, and I quote: We know that this just isn't a this-year thing. This is a multi-year. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister responsible tell us today which flood programs are, in fact, multi-year and how people can access them?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that the flood of 2011 is now the flood of 2011 and 2012. It's certainly evidenced by the continuing fact that we have Manitobans who are evacuees, have not returned home. It's continuing in terms of its impacts, and we still do have impacts from high water and inaccessibility issues as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is, in fact, a multi-year event already, and I want to again remind the member that the programs that we have put in place, whether it's disaster financial assistance or the BRAP program or other programs, continue to take applications. And we, indeed, are continuing to deal not only with the impacts but on the recovery, which will, in fact, not only continue this year, but we know it will take some time to get Manitobans back to normal. But that is, indeed, our goal.

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Speaker, I have to remind the minister that they will not take an application for 2012.

Mr. Speaker, surely the Finance Minister is prepared to step up and tackle the effects of this man-made flood on families and businesses. In May 2011, when he was Agriculture minister, he told CBC radio, and I quote again: We accept responsibility. We need to recognize that some Manitobans paid the price to protect the rest of us, and that means compensation, that means fair compensation. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister again: What steps is this government taking to provide the promised multi-year programming to victims of the 2011 flood, or is this just another promise?

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd remind the member opposite that we've already paid out \$314 million for disaster financial assistance under the BRAP program. We've had 65 per cent of applicants who have received either a partial or final payment for a total of \$66.4 million.

I could run through the details, Mr. Speaker, but I can also indicate that we've been very up front that in many cases we have areas where the cleanup is now only just beginning because, again, we're now finally at a stage where that cleanup can take place. Assessments are, in fact, taking place. So we acknowledge, we've been very up front that the numbers that we put forward, the very significant payouts in terms of compensation assistance are only part of the equation.

We're going to continue, Mr. Speaker, to work with flood victims, and we're going to continue to not only work on compensation assistance but on the cleanup and recovery stage with this historic flood, and we're going to have a historic recovery effort as well.

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the minister wants to help those still impacted by the man-made flood around Lake Manitoba. After all, he promised that aid would flow very quickly, and he promised the flood programs would be multi-year. He said the government accepts responsibility for a man-made flood.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit today to work with the stakeholders and to work with the MLAs whose constituencies are affected to put together the promised multi-year programs to help flood victims get back on their feet?

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, this government does continue to work with people from the affected areas. I met with a reeve yesterday from one of the affected flood municipalities.

Every member on this side, Mr. Speaker, has been fully engaged, not only ministers but MLAs, including the MLA for Interlake. We recognize, and we said right from day one, that this was a historic flood. I want to put in perspective that we saw flooding that was one in 350 years on the Assiniboine and the Souris.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite said we created the flood on the Souris and the Assiniboine. It shows you just how out of touch members opposite were. We had record flooding in Saskatchewan, record flooding in Minot, North Dakota. The member may want to check what happened last year, because we faced a major natural disaster, a historic flood, and we've dealt with it with a historic flood response.

The members are, clearly, Mr. Speaker, increasingly playing politics. I wish they'd work with us on the recovery. That's what Manitobans want.

Manitoba Hydro General Rate Application Delay

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): We've had questions in this House about the conflicting reports of Manitoba Hydro's net revenue projections. The budget shows \$65 million. In committee we saw that it could be a loss of \$51 million, just small discrepancy for this government, I know. But also in

committee, the CEO of Manitoba Hydro said it was their intent to file their general rate application for an increase of 3.5 per cent by the end of May.

My calendar shows it's well into June. Why the delay? Are they waiting for session to finish so they don't have to defend yet another tax and rate increase, another tax on Manitobans?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): As the CEO of Manitoba Hydro indicated at committee to members opposite, there will be increases in hydro as we go forward over the years, and Manitoba Hydro will continue to have the lowest utility rates in the country, in fact, bundled—[interjection]

And I remind members opposite that other public utilities, like BC Hydro, are looking at 15, 20 and 30 per cent increases in their hydro rates. We will continue to have the lowest rates in the country, and, in fact, Mr. Speaker, we've put in legislation, and I hope members opposite support that legislation we brought forward in this House.

Mr. Helwer: Well, Mr. Speaker, fortunately, we're talking about Manitoba Hydro, not other hydro. And, you know, Manitoba Hydro already has \$23 million of taxpayers' money that the PUB has said should be returned to ratepayers, and this has not yet happened. Their projections show they may need a 3.5 per cent rate increase every year to show a profit, at least.

Why are they delaying the May rate application? Does the minister know what is happening in Hydro or is he just telling them, just wait, wait until session's finished? Will it be a 5 per cent or higher increase? What's the hidden agenda here, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, when the president of Manitoba Hydro tells members at the committee that they're going to ask for a 3.5 per cent increase over the next three years, that's hardly hidden. It's in *Hansard*.

The hidden agenda is members opposite who want market rates for hydro, which would increase hydro excessively across and affect all consumers. And I might add that it was members opposite who voted against equalizing hydro rates across the province, that rural Manitoba and northern Manitoba are the same rates as urban Manitoba. Where do they stand on equalizing rates across the province?

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, it's always entertaining when the minister's asking us questions, but, you

know, we would love to pay the US spot market price because we'd be paying way less than we're paying now. That's subsidizing the Americans, but, you know, we've seen Hydro used as a political pawn and slush fund to fund this NDP government's spending addiction.

Why are Manitobans being forced to increase hydro rates to pay for this government's poor decisions? What is this NDP's government's hidden agenda for Manitoba Hydro and why they—why the delay on the rate increase?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how much clearer it has to be that the president of Manitoba Hydro said at committee they're going to ask for a 3.5 per cent increase, and they're going to do that this year and the next year and the following year.

That is in contrast to members opposite who (a) want to go to market rates, which would be 10 or 15 and 20 per cent; (b) want to privatize Hydro, Mr. Speaker; (c) do not agree with the expansion and development of bipole and the future hydro and an east-west grid that'll support all Canadians. The agenda's very clear: the no-grow, no-build, mothball, privatize Conservative Party versus the grow, keep it at regular rates, and help all Manitobans and help low-income Manitobans.

And we have a bill before the Legislature, be interesting to see how members opposite—

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

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (14:10)

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights is anxiously awaiting his turn. Please keep the level down a little bit.

The honourable member for River Heights has the floor.

Children's Advocate Request for Resignation

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I brought forward my concerns about the actions of the Children's Advocate in making negative comments about the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry. In question period I asked for the resignation of Darlene MacDonald, Manitoba's Children's Advocate.

The *Free Press* has said that Ms. MacDonald is off base. Dan Lett, a former child—wrote the

following: A former child—chief executive officer, Winnipeg Child and Family Services, MacDonald seems to have lost touch with the duties of the Children's Advocate. She doesn't represent the child and family services system, nor is it her job to advocate for social workers.

I ask the Premier today: Will he be asking for the resignation of the Children's Advocate?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well that the Children's Advocate is not accountable directly to the government. It's a person selected by all members of the Legislature and approved by all members of the Legislature, including the member from River Heights, and that her role is to act independent from government, to give her views on matters that are before her, including child welfare issues, obviously, which is the central focus of her activity.

And so, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I won't be asking for her resignation because that is a matter for the entire Legislature to consider. But members of the Legislature, independent officers of the Legislature, have the right to make their comments, and then they are in the public arena and can be properly debated in terms of the appropriateness of those comments and whether they move this agenda forward for making life in Manitoba safer for children.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, as Dan Lett wrote: In her comments about the excesses of this inquiry, MacDonald expressed no concerns about the actions of unions in repeatedly delaying testimony. Her failure to mention that would suggest she's once again losing sight of her duties in this matter. Dan Lett continued: MacDonald needs to remember she is not a union steward, a child welfare agency CEO, or a lawyer. She is the last line of defence for vulnerable children.

Given the Children's Advocate Darlene MacDonald's statement about the wasteful Phoenix Sinclair inquiry and her inadequate clarification yesterday, I ask the Premier: Will he support the effort to have Ms. MacDonald resign?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we support the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry of the Children's Advocate, and the statements that were reported publicly went on the record and said, I quote: The public has a right to know what went on in this situation. She has made that clear in her statements that are reported in the newspaper of record in this town, and the reality is

that this person's an independent officer of the legislation.

The inquiry has much serious work to do to understand what happened in this situation, to protect children in the future. The Children's Advocate has already acknowledged that.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the Children's Advocate, Darlene MacDonald, when she provided the clarification she failed to apologize for the inappropriateness of her comment, and, indeed, she rather just provided a restatement of the questions that she had raised about the Sinclair inquiry. Since the Children's Advocate has not even fully recognized the inappropriateness of her comments and hasn't issued a complete retraction or apology, it's hard to believe that the Premier is standing up for her continuing to be the Children's Advocate.

I ask the Premier: Will he now support Darlene MacDonald's resignation? Thank you.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we support the inquiry; the Children's Advocate supports the inquiry. This matter needs to proceed, and it will, according to what the commissioner thinks is appropriate in terms of readiness to move on that. The Children's Advocate is accountable to the Legislature, can come to standing committee of the Legislature.

What's important is that we get on with the inquiry, that all the information be put in front of the commissioner, that all the parties have a chance to make their comments, all the parties have a chance to be represented as appropriate, and that the conclusions of the inquiry give us further guidance on how we can make life safe for children in Manitoba that are in care of child welfare authorities.

That is the objective here, is to ensure that any child that comes into care of a child welfare authority is as safe as possible, and that's the purpose of the inquiry. I think we'd best get on with the inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

Manitoba Lotteries 55Plus Games Government Support

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, the continued good health of all ages of Manitobans is of critical importance to the government of Manitoba. This is especially so for our seniors population.

This morning in the Interlake community of Arborg, I attended a very special event, actually two

special events if you include a commemorative walk for the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

I ask the Minister responsible for Healthy Living to brief the House as to the details of what occurred this morning in the community of Arborg.

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to join the honourable member for Interlake at the kickoff of the Manitoba Lotteries 55Plus Games. Over 800 seniors converged on Arborg today and will participate in friendly competition over the next three days. These activities include many traditional competitions and also new additions, including a timed walk, pickleball, and card games. These events encourage both physical and mental activity, which directly correlate to better health outcomes. I'd like to thank the volunteers, organizers and sponsors that made this event possible.

We also participated in a walk to bring attention to elder abuse and the resources government has brought together to dealing with the issue. Friday is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. I encourage all members to participate in the events. Make elder abuse awareness a possibility out there and prevent it in the future, because that's what we're trying to do.

Lyme Disease Diagnoses and Patient Services

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, Mason French had the classic symptoms of Lyme disease, the bull's eye. This mark grows on the skin and is a key signal that Lyme disease might be present. No testing happened until he reached the fourth doctor.

Michelle Miller of Miami also had the same bull's eye, but it went untreated and she now needs a \$2,000 IV medication. Mason was prescribed two weeks of antibiotics originally; he was later referred for more, totalling more than five weeks. The federal government, led by Dr. Frank Plummer, recommends four weeks.

Can the Minister of Health explain what the parameters are for the antibiotics in Manitoba for Lyme's disease? And I table the classic bull's eye.

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Certainly, I would suggest to the member that I'm not a medical doctor and it wouldn't be appropriate for me to discuss my interpretation of a photograph of a rash or an illness or any such matter. And I would humbly suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it wouldn't be

appropriate for the member opposite to perhaps make an evaluation of a similar variety.

But I've been reflecting, Mr. Speaker, on the numerous questions that the member has asked about Lyme disease and, certainly, I would invite the member to work with me. I would be very happy to arrange a meeting with our public health department, with medical professionals if necessary so that they could provide him with more comprehensive information of a clinical nature on Lyme disease and perhaps explore some of his questions further.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Graydon: Well, Mr. Speaker, there was a meeting that was supposed to be scheduled for the 20th. It was cancelled because the Health Department wouldn't attend.

Numerous patients have called into my office with similar concerns around Lyme disease. One common thread has come through of all these concerns, and that is the testing is insufficient. There are two different types of tests that can administered when the symptoms are present and antibiotics can be prescribed afterwards.

Mr. Speaker, as I've asked many questions on Lyme disease, it has never been intention to reprimand or to question the professionalism or the integrity of our doctors, but it is apparent that the regulations are unclear.

I want to ask this Minister of Health: What are guidelines in this province for testing Lyme disease?

Ms. Oswald: Just on the subject of clarification, and I appreciate the member clarifying today that he doesn't think the doctors in Manitoba are incompetent, as his questions have suggested. So thank you for that clarification.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I did send the member a note yesterday asking him to send me some information about the case that he raised, because I know that he wants to care about the patients in Manitoba and not just bring them forward as stunts in question period. So I hope he has an opportunity to read his mail.

* (14:20)

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I would reiterate my invitation to him. I'm happy to set up a meeting with him and clinical experts so that he can discuss some of his questions about Lyme disease, certainly, as we have done with the advocates for Lyme disease in the

province, and they've expressed much satisfaction with that.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

William George Barker

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the memory of legendary combat pilot, Lieutenant Colonel William "Billy" George Barker, from Dauphin, and the naming of the new accommodation facility, the Barker Building at Southport Aerospace Centre. The \$1.5-million facility was designed to meet the needs of clients and students at Southport. I'd like to tell a brief story about William Barker to highlight the remarkable persistence of a member of our Canadian Forces in the face of danger.

On October 27th, 1918, Mr. Barker observed an enemy Fokker biplane over a forest near the Franco-Belgian border. He engaged this machine and broke it up in the air. Meanwhile, another enemy biplane attacked him from the side, wounding him in the right thigh. Despite this, he managed to outmanoeuvre and shoot down the enemy airplane in flames. He then attacked—he was then attacked by a large formation from all direction and was severely wounded in the left thigh, but again succeeded in driving down two of the enemy machines in a spin. He briefly lost consciousness, but on recovery, he found himself being attacked by a second large formation of which he was able to single out one machine, charge it and drive it down in flames. Again he fainted. Upon regaining consciousness for the second time, he was able to dive into the nearest enemy machine, shoot it down in flames before fighting his way out of the battle, gravely wounded in both legs and his left arm shattered, after which he crashed on landing, in retreat, just managing to reach friendly lines.

The story I quoted come from Mr. Barker's Victoria Cross citation. He is the most decorated serviceman in the history of the British Empire.

The young aviators training in the new Barker Building should note that Mr. Barker credited his abilities to his personal commitment to training, and he served as an advisor to the Canadian Air Force until his death in 1930. It is my honour to rise and tell his story as a member of the Canadian Air Force from Manitoba, and in his honour, the naming of the new—of the facility at Southport named the Barker Building.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Philippine Independence Day

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Mr. Speaker, today millions of people in the Philippines and around the world celebrate Philippine Independence Day. This marks 114 years since the proclamation of Philippine independence from Spanish colonial rule. Filipinos are a proud people with a long history of rising up and asserting their rights, culture and beliefs. The President of the Philippines, Benigno Aquino III, said today that the Filipino character is defined by ability, creativity and fortitude. It was these attributes that led to independence and have allowed the Filipino people to strike out all over the globe and make homes for themselves wherever they are.

Earlier this month, the ambassador from the Philippines to Canada was in Winnipeg to share good news about the old country with us. It is always good to hear about what's going on and see the strength of the relationship between our two countries. Of course, for me and many of my counterparts, Canada is the new country, and while we often look back to where we came from, we also look forward to look-building our future here in Canada and Manitoba.

The Philippines and Manitoba share a special relationship as many Filipinos have decided to make our province their home. The Philippines is consistently Manitoba's top source of immigrants, as more immigrants come to Manitoba from the Philippines than any other country. There is no area of life in our province that has not been affected by this immigration, and the Filipino people have become a much welcome member of Manitoba's tapestry of peoples. Manitoba's Filipino community is now almost 50,000 strong and their continuing contribution to our culture and economy is immeasurable.

Mr. Speaker, this Philippine Independence Day is the perfect time to reflect on the history and impact of the Filipino people. Let us reflect on the national motto of the Philippines: "Maka-Diyos, Maka-Tao, Makakalikasan at Makabansa." In English: "For the Love of God, People, Nature and Country." I wish my old country the happiest of celebrations today and I ask all of those in this new country to join me in celebrating alongside with them.

Thank you.

Tuxedo Community Centre

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to recognize the incredible work of the members of the Tuxedo Community Centre board of directors, convenors and volunteers have undertaken this year. Our community centre was established in 1969. It is located in the heart of Tuxedo and for the past 43 years has served as the hub for families to gather, to enjoy sports, educational activities and community connections.

This year our board of directors, convenors and volunteers have taken the initiative to revitalize our community centre in many ways: a new community newsletter that reaches out to 1,500 residents; the annual winter carnival weekend that featured a hockey tournament, sleigh rides, fireworks, and numerous children's activities; the annual crafts sale; and a spring carnival; and kids night out that hosted a ball hockey tournament, bouncers, carnival games and other interactive displays. These events and endeavours are above and beyond the regular schedule of programs organized through our community centre. The centre offers hockey, ringette, soccer, baseball, softball, basketball, tennis, karate, lawn bowling, kids yoga, as well as educational programs such as Mad Science and the I Can Pretend drama program for children on the autism spectrum, facilitated by Demetra Hajidiacos.

I would like to recognize the board and team of amazing program convenors and volunteers who dedicate their valuable time to the Tuxedo Community Centre and especially to our children: Tuxedo Community Centre president Colleen Nelson, past president Lori Shenkarow, vice-president Lora Stotts, treasurer Bob Faveri, secretary Leilani Kagan, preschool board representative Lynn Riddell, as well as program convenors Murray Riddell, Aaron Margolis, Christina Fast, Jamie Kagan, Tamara Woodward, Flannery Polanski, Tara Torchia-Wells, Natalie Newman, Christina Newman and the numerous parents who volunteer their time and assistance.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks and appreciation to Marcia Tyc, the volunteer crossing guard, and to the patrols who, whether it be rain, snow, sleet, hail or sun, dutifully serve as the crossing guards on Corydon to ensure that children attending École Tuxedo and the preschool program at Tuxedo Community Centre arrive safely.

I hope all members will join me in recognizing and congratulating the exceptional efforts of the Tuxedo Community Centre board of directors, program convenors and volunteers for their most commendable contribution to the Tuxedo constituency.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hotel Cambrian

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of a truly historic landmark in Sherridon, Manitoba: the venerable Hotel Cambrian. Two weekends ago, this iconic building was claimed by fire, taking with it over 90 years of history.

The four-storey Hotel Cambrian dated back to the 1920s when the community of Sherridon was created on the site of a northern mining operation by Sherritt Gordon. With the closing of the mine in the 1950s, many of the town's buildings included houses, churches and a bank, were hauled by tractor nearly 300 kilometres on rail north to the then-new mining town of Lynn Lake.

Luckily, the four-storey hotel was able to remain, as a testament to Sherridon's boom years. A peculiar tourist destination, it provided a vital link for future generations to Sherridon's past.

The Hotel Cambrian's long-time owner was Walter Shmon, who painstakingly took care of the building. Up until the 1990s, the vintage beds and original linoleum were still in place and in good shape. Unfortunately, Walter fell ill and passed away, and for the past decade the hotel had fallen into disrepair.

Mr. Speaker, my personal connection to the Hotel Cambrian goes back a long time. In 1951, my father stayed in the hotel while trying to find work. Later, in the 1980s, he and I visited the hotel, and Walter gave us a tour. We were allowed to take some souvenirs that are now displayed in my home. Walter was a born storyteller and published a book on the history of Sherridon at the age of 92.

The Hotel Cambrian was a community pillar to the town of Sherridon. The importance of historic buildings as links with our past cannot be overstated. When people understand what a community has gone through, and have visual reminders of its past, they can feel more connected to that place. Preserving a community's past gives us more understanding and hope for the future.

The town of Sherridon has suffered a terrible loss, and I share in that loss with them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Manitoba Organization of Disc Sports

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Organization of Disc Sports is a 24-year-old organization which was formed to provide support for the game commonly known as ultimate frisbee and to promote the sport and player development. It has become the fastest growing sport in North America today, and it is played in more than 42 countries by hundreds of thousands of ultimate players of all ages and skill levels in both male, female and the very popular coed leagues.

* (14:30)

Ultimate is an innovative team sport which is played using a flying disc with seven players on the field per team. The object of the game is to score points by having a player catch a pass while in the end zone that they are attacking. Typically games go to 17 points and the first team to reach this number wins the game. While competitive play is encouraged, players are also bound to the famous ultimate code of conduct, known as the spirit of the game, making the players themselves responsible for fair play.

The spirit of the game code of conduct is a beautifully crafted standard for friendly competition, which is one of the greatest achievements of this sport. Ultimate is played without a referee, and while it is incredibly competitive it is also considered very friendly and co-operative amongst the players. MODS initially began as a three-team, one night a week organization. Since then the Winnipeg ultimate league has grown to over 204 teams with over 3,300 players registered.

The scope of the organization has also grown to include disc golf and goaltimate. MODS now runs leagues for all its sports, outreach programs to promote disc sports and provides support for league athlete training and participation in high level national and international events.

It's my pleasure to honour the MODS today and to thank them for their spirit of the game philosophy, success in promoting local sports, and I wish them the best of luck in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY*(Continued)***GOVERNMENT BUSINESS****House Business**

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Would you please call second reading of Bill 39, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act.

SECOND READINGS**Bill 39— The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2012**

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call second reading of Bill 39, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2012.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), that Bill 39, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2012, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

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

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Health, that Bill 39, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2012, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

Mr. Struthers: It is my pleasure to have introduced the legislation that implements the measures announced in the 2012 Manitoba budget, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2012. These measures implement our successful strategy for steady, sustainable growth and help keep an affordable, high quality of life for Manitoba families.

Responsible government is about making responsible choices and staying focused on what matters most, Mr. Speaker. I am proud that our government is working hard to meet its commitment to the five-year economic plan.

We are working hard to balance expenditure reductions with modest, fair measures to increase revenues without raising major tax rates. In light of tax reductions this government has introduced since

1999—amounting to over \$1.2 billion. Our approach is the responsible path to restoring balance.

I would like to take this opportunity to add some clarity on the issue of the sales tax treatment of insurance premiums. The tax will not apply to insurance that covers health-care costs, but will apply to premiums for disability insurance and accident and sickness insurance.

The bill's current explanatory note suggests otherwise and, therefore, Legislative Counsel will be making the necessary changes to the explanatory note to resolve the ambiguity.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I am pleased to rise to today and put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 39, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act.

For—I'm sure it will be no shock to members opposite that this is not a bill that we on this side of the House will be supporting. It has a whole range and a number of tax increases that will be imposed upon Manitobans upon its passage in this Legislature.

And I need to remind members opposite that they did run in the last election campaign and—by saying that they would not increase taxes, and they turned around and this was their first available opportunity to increase taxes by some \$184 million on Manitobans.

Also in this are fee increases, which is like a hidden tax on Manitobans. Those fee increases amount to some \$114 million that will be raised on the backs of hard-working Manitobans. And so, for that reason, Mr. Speaker, we are quite opposed to this piece of legislation.

Members opposite should have known at the time when they were running in the last election they thought it was probably a popular thing not to raise taxes. People voted based on what they heard from the party, Mr. Speaker, and from their party, and they were not expecting to have to be subject to this kind of tax increase, any kind of tax increase, because they were told emphatically in the last election by the leader of the NDP, the now-Premier of this province, that he would not raise taxes.

And it's unfortunate that we're standing before the Legislature today and we are debating this bill, 39, and that it's full of tax increases that this NDP

government is trying to raise, and will be raising, on the backs of hard-working Manitobans.

So, having said those few words, Mr. Speaker, we would just like to indicate that we will not be supporting Bill 39. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I would like to comment that the number of tax increases here, and the nature of this bill, the fact that we have a billion-dollar deficit this year, really shows that for 12 and a half years the accumulated effect of poor fiscal management by this government has added up and has achieved a poor situation for our province.

The incredible amount of wasteful spending over 12 and a half years; the poor effort at budget management, so that they have never, in that whole period, managed to reach or match their budgeted targeted for expenditures—they've always been over; their poor management of business practices; an untendered contract for a hundred million dollars not long ago are all examples of the lack of really good, sound financial planning by this government.

And that's a reason why the Liberal Party will be voting against this legislation. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate? House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House is second reading of Bill 39, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2012.

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 motion, 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: The Ayes have it. The motion is accordingly passed.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader): On division, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On division. The motion is passed on division.

House Business

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): We're prepared to begin the main and capital process, so would you please move us into the Committee of Supply to consider the resolution respecting the Capital Supply bill?

Mr. Speaker: The House will now resolve into the Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

CAPITAL SUPPLY

Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff): Committee of Supply, please come to order.

We have before us for our consideration the resolution respecting Capital Supply. The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,433,065,000 for Capital Supply for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2013.

Resolution agreed to.

Call in—committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

* (14:40)

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered and adopted the Capital Supply resolution.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Would you move us back into Committee of Supply?

Mr. Speaker: We'll now resolve into the Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair again.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Concurrence Motion

Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): I move that the Committee of Supply concur in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2013, which have been adopted at this session, whether by a section of the Committee of Supply or by the full committee.

That would be seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers).

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: On June 11th, 2012, the Official Opposition House Leader (Mrs. Taillieu) tabled the following list of ministers of the Crown who may be called for concurrent questioning today in debate on the concurrence motion: Finance, Justice, Health, Immigration and Multiculturalism, Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): All right, thank you very much—now that I figure out where we're at.

And I do have a question for the—a few questions, actually, for the Minister of Finance, and one thing I was quite concerned about was a document that was tabled after our Estimates period which was the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, the 2012-2013 Revenue Estimates, and those—I would just like to ask why that was tabled after our session in Estimates?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Well, quite frankly, that was so that the member for Tuxedo could have all of the information that she had asked for in our Estimates session that we had. I had undertaken to get back to the member on revenue items that she was interested in. I believe that was a pretty thorough way in which to accomplish the request that she made of me and our department.

Mrs. Stefanson: I don't believe—I believe in past years we have received the Revenue Estimates as well as the Expenditure Estimates at the same time, prior to us going into Estimates. Is that not correct?

Mr. Struthers: Well, I—let me check to see what normal practices are. If that's out of the normal practice, I'll report back to the member for Tuxedo. My understanding, and maybe this is just me being the—going through the process for the first time, my understanding was that we were responding to a request that the member made, that this would be the normal process. If that's out of the ordinary, I will endeavour to get back to the member on that.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, I thank the minister for that but, in the past, I know when I have done this in the past and I've been with the former minister of Finance, the Revenue Estimates came with the Expenditure Estimates at the same time, and that was common practice in the past.

And I think this is a pretty significant issue because we're getting to the close—to the end of session here. We're now in concurrence and, you know, so we do have an opportunity to ask some questions here. But this was tabled later than it should have been, and it should have been tabled prior to us going into normal Estimates with the Minister of Finance and his department, so that we could ask appropriate questions or have the opportunity to ask questions of the minister in the presence of his staff at the time.

And so I do have significant issue with not having received the Revenue Estimates on a timely—in a timely manner, in time for Estimates. And I know the minister has said that he'll check what normal practices are and he'll get back to me. But I do have a very significant problem with this. I don't believe this is normal practice.

I don't know how the government expects us to be able to ask questions on the Revenue Estimates, if they're not tabled in the Legislature and tabled in this Chamber prior to our opportunity to come and ask questions of the minister in the presence of his staff in the Department of Finance. Does he believe that it's appropriate, regardless of past practices, but I do believe that it is past practice to have those estimates ahead of time, to be able to ask those questions at the appropriate time. Does he see that there's a bit of an issue here?

Mr. Struthers: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, if—as I said, if in Estimates, my commitment to the member for Tuxedo is to get as much information to her as I can, at an appropriate time. I don't know what the normal practice has been in terms of those—the revenue document that she has there today. I know that I tabled those as early as I could.

But as I said, if that's not the normal practice or even if there's a better way to do it that is helpful to the member for Tuxedo, I'm willing to take that on and make sure that she has, in her hands, appropriate information and documents to help her do her job, and so that she can make some contributions to the budgetary process as well. I can undertake that, Mr. Chairperson, but again, I'm not aware of what the past practices were, but I'm willing to follow up with that.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, I mean, I guess I would just ask the minister: How is it even possible to ask questions, or why? Perhaps I'll start with why, this document, he feels that he tabled it at the earliest opportunity possible, because that—he did not table it until after we were finished our Estimates session. So if this wasn't prepared for the Estimates session, then why wasn't it prepared for our Estimates?

* (14:50)

Mr. Struthers: As I've said, Mr. Chairperson, I will find that out. My commitment has been to get, as soon as I have available to me, the information that is either provided through normal practice to members opposite, or to respond to the requests that come forward from the member opposite.

But, again, Mr. Speaker, I really am committed to the normal practices that have been followed in this House and I'm prepared to investigate that.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, I'd like to ask the minister, when he first received the Estimates of revenue book on his desk, was it after our Estimates session took place?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Chairperson, I'd have to—I don't know off the top of my head. I'll find that out for the member opposite.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Chair, there's a significant issue here. How are we able to do our jobs in the Manitoba Legislature if we are not given the Estimates books prior to our session in the Estimates process? Obviously, we've got a situation here where the Revenue Estimates were not tabled at the same time as the Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Finance, and this is a significant issue.

And I wonder if the minister it—does this have something to do—because, coincidentally, one of the biggest issues that's come up in terms that could affect the revenues are not only the tax increases that are mentioned in the budget, that's some

\$184 million in tax increases and the \$114 million in fee increases, Mr. Chair, but there's also been a significant debate in the public with respect to increasing the PST. Does this delay have anything to do with what the government is thinking about doing in terms of raising the PST?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I found interesting was the—in my deputy minister's office he has collected every budget speech that has been given in this Legislature dating right back to the beginning of our province. I can assure the member for Tuxedo that in every one of those budget speeches the Finance Minister, or provincial treasurer, as they were called at one point, dealt with revenues. There has been a long-standing practice of dealing with revenues and expenditures that the department is fully aware of. This is not the first time that a government has talked about revenues. Every year, every budget, there is a discussion about revenues. It's not a—I don't want to feed into conspiracy theories from across the way about this. This is normal practice. I want to be sure that we follow normal practice in terms of when we get information into the hands of members opposite, whether or not they like the numbers that are contained in the documents that we give them or whether they can use them politically is up to them. But I want to be sure that we do follow the normal practices that are set out in this House. This isn't the first budget that has been delivered in this House and there are practices that we follow. I've undertaken to make sure that we at least follow those practices.

I have also indicated that I'm open to suggestions on how to make the job of the member for Tuxedo easier in terms of having information available to her.

So, Mr. Chairperson, I will follow up on that. I will make sure that, you know, for my own interest at the very least, I want to know and I want to be sure that the normal practices in terms of releasing documents to opposition has been followed, and I've undertaken to do that.

Mrs. Stefanson: You know, I appreciate the minister looking into that, but this is a pretty significant issue, and it impedes us from being able to do our job in the Legislature when we're not given the material prior to sitting in our Estimates process.

How are we able to ask questions of the minister with his staff there who, you know, who I know play significant role in terms of getting some of the

answers and so on for the minister in the Estimates process.

And I think it's very difficult for us to be able to do our jobs. I've never seen this before. And, you know, I think that this is a pretty serious issue. And if, for some reason, this document was withheld from being tabled in the Legislature because there's something in it that the minister doesn't want me to ask—be asking questions on, because, you know, in Estimates and—because, a lot of the time, these are very, you know, these are technical things that are in these documents, and they do need their staff there to answer those questions.

And, often, when you come into concurrence, we're just asking questions of the minister and he will take them under advisement, it's very difficult, sometimes, to get those questions answered and to get that information back to us, if he takes them under advisement.

And I guess I would just ask the minister at this stage, clearly, something went wrong here. We did not receive this document in a timely fashion. It has affected my ability to be able to do my job as an opposition critic for Finance here at the Manitoba Legislature, and it's impacted—it's had a negative impact on, I think—for Manitoba taxpayers and Manitoba families, by not giving me this document, to be able to properly ask those questions in front of the minister with his staff present.

So I think it is a very significant issue and I appreciate him looking into it, and—but I will also say that—and I'll ask the minister: Given what has happened here, will he allow us to submit potential questions in the future, in the way of a letter to his office, where he and his staff will endeavour to get back to us on any questions to do with this document in a very timely fashion, and, I mean, you know, within a week of us getting the questions to him?

Mr. Struthers: Well, I don't mind making undertakings on behalf of the member for Tuxedo, but I think she needs to keep this in perspective as well. I mean, I object to her saying that something went wrong. Mr. Chairperson, she shouldn't assume that. My assumption is that the traditional practices, the acceptable practices that have been done in the past, could have been followed on this. I volunteered to investigate that to see. I don't think she should impugn guilt on anyone, whether it's me or anybody else in the department. I don't think she should be doing that. It may be that standard practice was

followed on this. I've undertaken to find that out on behalf of the member for Tuxedo.

Certainly, if she wants to write questions to me—I have questions from Manitobans written to me all the time. We respond as quick as we can. I do want to get into the hands of not just the member for Tuxedo, but other Manitobans, the real facts, the real story on the revenue side, in my mind, that helps the member for Tuxedo to keep her questions and her information within the realm of the believable. I totally believe in helping members to do that.

So I don't want her to assume that something went wrong. If something went wrong, I will—I'll find that out, and we will, as we have in the past, take steps to make sure that normal practices do get followed. But it's not correct, and it's wrong on her part, to suggest that something, obviously, went wrong. We'll find out about that, but, in the meantime, if she wants to write questions to me on revenue, that would be fine.

I will point out, though, that even without the information that she claims interferes with her doing her job, she did ask questions about revenue in Estimates. I answered them, with the assistance of my staff then. So I would suggest that she has been able to ask questions in terms of revenue. Understanding that, though, Mr. Chairperson, I have undertaken to get back to the member in terms of—and made a commitment to make sure that that information is as timely as we can possibly make it.

* (15:00)

Mrs. Stefanson: And just a couple of comments in rebuttal to the minister's comments. I'm not assuming that something went wrong; I know something went wrong here, because this is not common practice in the Manitoba Legislature to receive the Revenue Estimates books or any Estimates books after the Estimates session has taken place for that given—for that government department. I've never seen that in the Manitoba Legislature. So I'm not assuming something went wrong; I know something went wrong. And I don't think it's right and I don't think it's fair.

But, you know, here we are today. We're through our Estimates and this is our opportunity today to ask some questions of the minister, again, without its staff—without his staff. But the minister did also indicate that I did ask some questions of revenue—pertaining to revenue in the Estimates process, and that's because I was asking questions of the budget,

from the budget books. And we know that not all of the detailed information is contained within those budget books and that's why the government tables, in the Manitoba Legislature, Estimates books prior to our session in Estimates because it's a more detailed version of that particular government department and, in this case, the Revenue Estimates for the Department of Finance.

And so, unless the minister is saying that these Estimates books are irrelevant, and I don't think that's what he's saying, but had I had this book prior to the Estimates process or during the Estimates process—should be tabled prior to, it always has in the past—had I had this Revenue Estimates book prior to sitting in Estimates with the minister, which we did for 10 hours, and—I would have been able to ask him some very important questions that are within this document.

And so I think it's unfortunate that it's left to this, at the eleventh hour, and it's tabled in the Legislature and I have, you know, but a few minutes to ask questions of the minister when I would have had and would have made more time to ask questions based on the material within these books. So, I do appreciate the minister giving me the opportunity to submit some questions pertaining to this Revenue Estimates book, and I hope that—I'm wondering if he—and I'm not sure if he can answer this question, but is it possible in—to have those questions and answers pertaining to the Revenue Estimates show up in *Hansard* as well?

Mr. Struthers: Well, Mr. Chairperson, I understand the request that the member is making. I have committed to making sure that as much information as possible was in her hands at appropriate times. I'm open to her advice on, you know, what that information is and when she needs it. That's all fair ball. We did have in excess of 10 hours in Estimates.

My—I guess, when thinking back on it, I wish the member had mentioned something then. If this was normal procedure and she didn't have the information that she needed at the time, I wish she'd have mentioned it to me then instead of waiting to the eleventh hour, as she describes it, and maybe we could have done something about it then. She didn't, so the best I can do is promise that we're going to follow up, make sure that normal practices are followed by myself and the department, and come through with my commitment of making sure she has information that she needs to do her job.

Again, she's welcome to put together letters and send them to me. We will, as I always do, and as our Department of Finance always does—we respond to those letters. We do it as quickly as we can because we want to have correct information in the hands of not just the member for Tuxedo, but all of Manitobans so they—so that they can see what a balanced approach, what type of a balanced approach, we are putting forward and the rationale behind the revenue decisions that we make and the expenditure decisions that we make.

So I will undertake, should she write me letters on these issues, to respond as quickly as we can.

Mrs. Stefanson: I thank for the minister for that. I do. I would appreciate the opportunity to ask some questions on this document, and so we will endeavour to do that through a letter just in the interests of time and—in the Legislature.

I just wanted to ask just a couple of more questions with respect to the debate that's taking place on the retail sales tax in Manitoba. We do know that there are various organizations that are calling for this increase, and I'm wondering if the minister could indicate what sorts of meetings he has had with stakeholders in the community with respect to an increase in the retail sales tax.

Mr. Struthers: Well, beginning with the pre-budget consultations, we met with a number of Manitobans, these kinds of issues were brought up at that time. Of course, there was a variety of opinions in terms of advice in terms of how you go about balancing a budget. I think most people that came to our meetings wanted us to do essentially what we ended up doing, Mr. Chairperson, and that is a combination, a balanced approach, between managing our spending with increasing modestly income tax—or sorry, revenue rates, or revenue opportunities, which is what we ended up doing.

One of the things that the people in Manitoba said to us is actually not to bump up the rate on the PST, not to move it up from 7 per cent, which, as the member knows, we've been—there's been a number of groups—and I think—I'm not sure, but I think, maybe, even members opposite have encouraged us to do, Mr. Chairperson. We've been clear that we're not going to raise the 7 per cent up to a higher number that—and you can see that in this budget. We have done what the—what has been done before in this province, and that is expanded the base of the PST to include other services.

One that the member opposite has raised, comes on the—when we expanded into insurance and some of those kinds of services that are there for Manitobans. We, I think, had some very good meetings with representatives of insurance and investors and others to help us, and, I think, some very good advice in terms of helping us implement that measure in a fair way. I think their advice really did help us, and some of the things we agreed to do on their behalf really made those—that decision doable. There were folks in the insurance industry who understood that, our overall approach to revenue, and I think many of them thought that, you know, I don't know of anybody who wants to pay more in terms of the PST, but I think they understood that we needed to, as a government, have a balanced approach, and this is one of the items that put us in that category. They had some very good advice on how to implement, and implement fairly. We took almost all of that advice, and I think we've come up with a better position, and a better implementation, than what we would have had without members of the insurance and investor community coming to talk to us.

So we've had a lot of decisions—or, sorry, a lot of discussions flowing from our decision to broaden that PST tax base.

* (15:10)

Mrs. Stefanson: So, I mean, one of the things that we do see in this budget that with the expansion of the PST in terms of the products and services that are now subject to PST, the \$184 million in tax increases in revenues for the government as well as \$114 million in increases in fees, is pretty much almost the equivalent of 1 per cent, if not even a little bit more, Mr. Chair. And so, effectively, the government has maybe chosen to increase PST services to hard-working Manitobans and primarily to products and services that affect women, that affect seniors, that affect families in the way of insurance products. And I think it's unfortunate that the NDP is paying for their mismanagement of the government budget on the backs of those people in our province and, you know, at the same time they bring forward a bill like Bill 34, the P3 bill, that essentially is putting a nail in the coffin of P3 projects in the city of Winnipeg and, indeed, in Manitoba.

And I think it's unfortunate because it's been proven time and time again that in the city of Winnipeg there's been a number of projects,

P3 projects, that have been nationally and internationally recognized as being completed, infrastructure projects, on budget and on time, and that they have in the end opened up the ability for the government, the City of Winnipeg government, to participate in more projects at that time because they don't have to put all of the money up front. So it opens up the opportunity to get more projects done more quickly, and we know the infrastructure deficit within the province of Manitoba that is here and, indeed, across Canada, but these P3 projects are a way to deal with that infrastructure deficit.

So why is the government, at this point in time, trying to eliminate—which is effectively what this legislation will do—why are they trying to eliminate a—the ability for the City of Winnipeg to look at P3s as a possibility when looking at different infrastructure projects moving forward that need to be completed as part of this infrastructure deficit? It's a tool that they will be able to use or that they should be able to use, but, unfortunately, they are not able to and they won't be able to after this bill—I mean, hopefully, it doesn't pass, but after it does pass.

I think it's an unfortunate thing for Manitobans and so, you know, I just—I ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers): Why is it that, you know, on one hand, he is raising taxes to pay for infrastructure projects, but on the other hand he's, at the same time, eliminating projects, P3 projects that could potentially save the government lots of money in the future?

Mr. Struthers: Well, nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Chairperson.

But let's—two parts to the question. The first part, let's deal with the expansion of the PST that we did put forward. We—as we've mentioned here, we've expanded it to include insurance products; yes, haircuts over \$50; tattoos; manicures; pedicures. That's what we've done in Budget 2012.

Compare that, Mr. Speaker, compare that to what Conservatives did, compare that to what the member for Tuxedo defends, compare that to newspapers, magazines, kids' clothing. You know, the Conservatives expanded the PST to include kids' clothing; non-prescription drugs; the Conservatives thought it was fine to put the 7 per cent on that; feminine hygiene products, supplies, feminine hygiene supplies—you know, the hypocrisy of people across the way. School supplies—school supplies, Mr. Chairperson—baby supplies, safety clothing, footwear and equipment—can you imagine? The member for

Tuxedo comes in and complains about us expanding the PST, and her party, instead of trying to support workers, instead of trying to put, you know, put measures in place that would keep workers safe, members opposite—and they did this; this is factual—members opposite took the 7 per cent and applied it to safety clothing, footwear and equipment and then, for good measure, they threw sewing patterns in there, I guess, just because they were—a little bit of a mean streak to them, I guess.

The other thing that they managed to do back then was they increased the fuel tax by two and a half cents—two-and-a-half-cent increase on a price of gas at that time of 50 cents a litre, which is quite the percentage, Mr. Chairperson. The point is that it's a better—I think more equitable measure to expand an already existing sales tax and do that carefully and modestly, rather than doing it—draconian—in a 'dacionian'—draconian fashion that we saw Conservatives do.

Now, the other part of that question dealt with P3s, Mr. Chairperson, and we had very good presentations—kind of two different perspectives last night, which was very interesting. I would caution the member for Tuxedo in the language that she uses. Absolutely not is the last nail being driven into the P3 coffin, as she suggests.

Canada—the federal—her friends in Ottawa who put in place a framework by which we've taken to—was one of the models by which we set our legislation up with, Mr. Chairperson—they've taken an approach where they put an analysis into whether a P3 is warranted or not. They have their Auditor General taking a look at their process, just as we've put in place. There's a lot of similarities between what we're proposing and what Ottawa has in place, yet the member opposite isn't making the case that P3s are going to get smoked by the federal government.

Mr. Chairperson, the province of Québec has even a more stringent—a stronger approach to P3s than the federal government does, and the P3s in Québec certainly haven't gone the way of the passenger pigeon. The—British Columbia has put in place a framework that they have a lot of confidence in. They are—my understanding is they're not experiencing the end of P3s. I think we have to have a broader view than the narrow focus of members opposite on this one.

Mr. Chairperson, we heard very clearly last night of members of the public—stakeholders coming forward last night and telling us that there are

successful P3s and there are unsuccessful P3s. We have to deal with that. We have to put a framework in place that can provide transparency and accountability to the three Ps. We should make use of the three—P3 model. That's fine, but we need to have a transparency and an accountability associated to that.

I don't understand why members opposite aren't in favour of transparency and accountability. They talk about it—[interjection] Yes, they talk about it all the time, but when it comes actually time to put their money where their mouth is, they back off. I think they're driven by ideology on this instead of practicality. We're going to make sure that we put a transparent, accountable value-for-money framework in place that'll help us help the City of Winnipeg and others to make sure that we make the most of our infrastructure dollars.

* (15:20)

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): To the Attorney General. We've had some discussions regarding section 810, peace bonds, during question period. Can he indicate whether or not there'd be any concern on his part to have a departmental policy, a prosecution directive, to seek a peace bond with a— with an order for an electronic monitoring device on any individual where a public notice is put out by the integrated task force where somebody is deemed a high-risk offender.

I know it doesn't apply all that often. We—those notices don't come out one a day, but we certainly do see them maybe one a month where individuals are released who are either have completed their sentence or being released for other reasons and are deemed to be a risk to the public.

Is there any reason why the minister wouldn't think it'd be a good idea to have a prosecution policy where there'd always be a request for a peace bond that would include electronic monitoring on these individuals?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Well, thank you. And there's really two parts to that question. I mean, the first is whether a peace bond is possible. And, again, as we discussed last week, there are some situations where somebody who returns to the community is still on parole and they're under the jurisdiction of the federal Correctional Service. They may be out on probation, in which case they're already governed by probation services, operated by Justice Manitoba.

The question is if somebody comes out, they've served their time and there aren't any other controls, is there the possibility of a peace bond.

Well, yes, there is a possibility, but I guess the question is whether a peace bond is something that's likely to be successful, which always is the test when a prosecutor moves ahead, and, I guess, we'd have to look at each case to see whether it would be appropriate. And here's what I'm at: I mean, we know that if, for example, somebody comes out of a federal institution and there's a real prospect of somebody who's been convicted of domestic violence taking action against one person or a small group of people, a peace bond can sometimes be a useful tool to try and restrict that.

If it's somebody who's released into the community and the concern is general—which sometimes happens in these kinds of cases the member's speaking about, where the concern is not by one individual person or a small group of people, but by the community generally—it's difficult to see, although every case is different—it's difficult to see, in general, that a peace bond can provide a workable remedy that adds to community safety. But there may be cases where, in fact, it is possible.

The second piece of that—I know the member tried to connect it to electronic monitoring. Again, electronic monitoring is continuing in the province of Manitoba. We've committed to expanding the role of electronic monitoring. But there's two things I do want to say: The first is that electronic monitoring should not take the place of somebody being incarcerated if they pose a real threat to society. The other piece is that electronic monitoring itself has its limitations, and if electronic monitoring is used to enforce a curfew, for example, that seems to be a positive way which can be part of an expansion of electronic monitoring. If it is to keep somebody from attending a certain place or a limited number of places, that can be useful, but where the concern expressed by the police, in their view, is that somebody poses a risk, for example, to women, it's difficult to see that electronic monitoring is going to have the kind of impact that we think it should.

So, you know, is it worthy of some more thought? Well, yes, it is. Is it simply an answer to suggest that either this will enhance public safety? In many cases, I don't think so. But, you know, our prosecutors, of course, in some cases, do obtain peace bonds when they're individuals that pose a threat to public safety. We know that the federal

Crown prosecutors have moved ahead with peace bonds and have tried to use them in some creative ways to deal with individuals that we expect are involved with organized crime. So I'll take advice from my prosecutors.

Mr. Goertzen: Well—and here's where I think there's either a confusion or a disconnect or perhaps both, Mr. Chairperson, because, you know, in the—the minister cites the case where an individual's served his entire sentence. So then, electronic monitoring, obviously, isn't replacing incarceration because the individual's being released because he has served his entire sentence, and yet the integrated task force's indicating that the person still is a risk.

Now, in the case where somebody is deemed to be a risk to all women over the age of 18, which I think was the specific case we were discussing, true, the electronic monitoring wouldn't prevent them from going or being in contact with that specified population. But I think the point is it might be a deterrent in terms of actions that might happen. So it's not—I think the minister is confused a bit in that, certainly, sometimes electronic monitoring is designed to prevent individuals who've been convicted of certain crimes from coming into certain locations: playgrounds, schools, and those alerts can be set up.

Other times it can simply be a deterrent on an individual's actions or to ensure that they're, you know, abiding by curfews or those sorts of things. So I don't quite understand why the minister is expressing reluctance at (a) it can replace incarceration when an individual is being released and they aren't going to be incarcerated because they have completed their sentence; and (b) regardless of the population that they might be putting at risk or seem to be putting at risk, it can be provided to deterrent or at least ensure that a person's adhering to curfew standards that have put in place.

So, to me, it seems entirely logical that a policy, a general policy indicating individuals who are posing that risk to the community—and, again, it's not like there's not 20 of these a day; it's a handful that come out every few months—why they shouldn't have electronic monitoring placed on them.

Mr. Swan: Well, again, I think it's necessary to really separate the two issues. I mean, the first is whether there's a possibility of obtaining a peace bond against somebody. I mean, a peace bond is—I don't want to call it extraordinary remedy because it's—I mean, it is obtained in various circumstances

where prosecutors, whether they're provincial or federal, believe that it enhances public safety. I can indicate that judges aren't prepared simply to grant any condition that a Crown prosecutor may want where somebody has served out a sentence. One would expect that a judge or a judicial official would look very carefully at the kind of evidence that could be brought forward by a Crown prosecutor in deciding whether it's appropriate.

The electronic monitoring piece, though, is sort of a separate issue. It can be a term of a probation order. It can be a term of bail conditions. Yes, in theory, it could be part of a—conditions under a peace bond. But, again, Crown prosecutors would have to make the case if we were able to expand electronic monitoring in that direction, that it was appropriate and that it was expected to protect public safety. And, again, I, you know, there may be some judicial comment that I'm not aware of, but I do have some concern that using electronic monitoring simply for somebody who may pose a risk to 51 or 52 per cent of the population may not have the kind of impact or the kind of benefit that a judge would find appropriate.

So, again, as we move to expand electronic monitoring we're going to want to make sure that it's in a way that benefits public safety. When we expand electronic monitoring we're going to want to make sure there is a response because, of course, the—it's not enough that somebody simply has an electronic monitoring bracelet on. We want to make sure that police and probation services move quickly if somebody does not follow the terms of the peace bond or the probation order, as the case may be, that resulted in the electronic monitoring bracelet being on in the first place.

So I'm not dismissing what the member's saying out of hand, but I just—the member needs to understand that it's not as simple as perhaps was portrayed.

Mr. Goertzen: See, and I would argue, Mr. Speaker, and we're not in a moot court exercise so I won't argue it too long, but the greater the population that's at risk, one would seem to think that the more the argument would hold for electronic monitoring. And I agree with the Attorney General that you don't want it as sort of a—where you're applying for electronic monitoring for everything and so that the value of it in a judicial sense, is diminished. But these are extraordinary cases. I mean, there aren't that many notices that are put out in a relative sense, and by the

time the integrated task force decides to put out a notice to the public they've already determined that an individual who's finished their sentence, you know, often they haven't participated in any sort of programming in custody or they haven't—or they've indicated that—they have acknowledged that they are a risk to reoffend, and that sometimes happens, or they've done something within the prison context to demonstrate that they're a risk to reoffend. So it's not as though it's a terribly common sort of thing, and that's reflected in the fact that there aren't that many, relatively, notices put out on dangerous sex offenders when they're released.

* (15:30)

So I would hope the minister would reconsider that. I think it makes perfect sense to have some policies in place on this. I think it would be considered a very reasonable measure by the public. And I don't agree with the Attorney General, and if he has some briefings or other legal advice he'd like to provide in terms of why the fact that an individual is putting a larger percentage of the population at risk, why that makes it less likely that they should have electronic monitoring as opposed to more likely, I'd like to see that.

But he may want to respond to some of that, but I'll give him also another question that he can respond to in the context of that. Could he also update me on the status of the Manitoba Police Commission in terms of its appointments and its functioning?

Mr. Swan: Well, on the Manitoba Police Commission, of course, the commission was announced last year. There is an executive director of that police commission. I think that was—we've already discussed that at Estimates.

As the member knows, we have brought into force the sections of The Police Services Act which will require municipal police services to be governed by a police board. That—under the legislation, that gives a six-month period for municipalities to comply, so any municipality with its own police force will need to have its own police board up and running by December the 1st.

Mr. Goertzen: What sort of work is the Manitoba Police Commission engaged in at this point, then?

Mr. Swan: Well, there's a number of different areas. I mean, the—one piece which does not directly deal with the police boards is preparing for the independent investigation unit, and that unit is going

to be moving ahead with the hiring of a civilian director.

On the police board side, one of the things that we've discussed with the mayors of the various communities—mayors and reeves, I should say, of the various communities that will be having police boards, they've made it very clear to us they want assistance in terms of making sure that board members are aware of their role, that they receive advice on what their responsibilities are, some guidance on what they should be doing in terms of their work as a board member.

Beyond that, the Police Commission is also doing work on standards for police officers generally across the province. They're relying heavily on other provinces. I mean, most provinces across the west and also a few to the east of us already have police commissions. So they've been gathering information, pulling it together and making sure that standards that we use here in Manitoba are appropriate for Manitoba, given our particular geographical issues and other issues, and they are hard at work on pulling those things together.

Mr. Goertzen: Does the minister know if the Police Commission is looking at the concept of a police college in Manitoba?

Mr. Swan: Well, the idea of standards and training for police officers and standards and expectations for police chiefs are things that the board is looking at.

To the best of my knowledge, the commission is not specifically answering or looking at the question of a separate police college. Right now, of course, there are a couple of ways in which police officers in Manitoba are trained. Of course, our RCMP members are trained at Depot in Regina. Winnipeg Police Service officers are trained through the Winnipeg Police Academy. That academy also trains a certain number of officers from some other communities. As well, there's facilities in Brandon for the training of police officers.

Mr. Goertzen: What time frame does the minister expect the independent investigation unit to be operating? And the hiring of the civilian overseer, what is the time frame for that as well?

Mr. Swan: Sure, well, there is a couple of pieces. The first is the hiring of a civilian director for the IIU, the independent investigation unit. That search is now under way, and I'm hopeful that in the next couple of months we'll be able to announce the successful candidate for that position. At the same

time, the board will be training civilian monitors who will play a role when there is an investigation. The new civilian director of the IIU will then work at hiring other staff that he or she will need to carry out their activities. It's still some time away before the unit is in full operation and able to investigate cases that can be referred to it.

Mr. Goertzen: Not knowing exactly what some time means, would that be a year, or more than a year, that the minister is projecting for the unit to be up and running?

Mr. Swan: Sure, well, you know, we'd like the unit to, you know, to be operational. A lot of that will depend on how quickly the new civilian director can work at pulling that together. Obviously, we want the IIU to get off on the right foot. We want to make sure that we have the right director, but also the right employees. We want to make sure that the civilian monitors are well trained and aware of what their duties will be before we can, so to speak, flip that switch and have investigations conducted by that unit. So I would like to think later this calendar year, but I'm expecting it will be next year.

Mr. Goertzen: There's been some discussion about the role that the Manitoba Police Commission would play in the hiring of a new chief of police for the City of Winnipeg. Can the minister clarify what role would the Police Commission play?

Mr. Swan: Well, the—of course, with Chief McCaskill announcing he wouldn't be considered for a further term, the City of Winnipeg has now embarked on its search for a new police chief. The police board for the City of Winnipeg is required to be set up before, on or before, December 1st. The City of Winnipeg could, if it chose to, set up their board sooner, and have that board play an active role. The advice I'm getting from the City is that they are already under way in terms of selecting their new chief. I understand they've got a firm that's assisting them in that process.

So the City of Winnipeg may take advice from the Province of Manitoba. We'll be quite prepared to give that advice, but, unless the City of Winnipeg sets up its board before the new chief is hired, we're not actually going to force the City's hand on using the new process.

Mr. Goertzen: I don't want to read anything into the minister's comments. Is he suggesting his department or his office has made a recommendation or a suggestion to the City that they have their police

board established before the hiring of the chief of police?

Mr. Swan: No, we have not.

Mr. Goertzen: There was a suggestion made by a mutual fan of—the minister and I have, Mr. Sel Burrows, about domestic violence and a review of domestic violence. And I'm a believer that just because somebody's wrong on some things, doesn't mean he's wrong on everything. And I think that there were some suggestions about an all-party committee looking at domestic violence and the things that haven't been done over the last number of years and things that could be improved upon. Has the minister considered that suggestion at all?

Mr. Swan: No, but I can mention it. We're always looking to improve the way that we—first, that we serve victims of domestic violence, the way that we deal with offenders, and, of course, the biggest piece, preventing domestic violence from happening and from escalating. So, you know, the member shouldn't be surprised that he'll be hearing more of what we're doing on that front in the months to come.

* (15:40)

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Yes, a question for the Minister of Health pertaining to the area of supportive housing, and I know that last week we had a conversation at Estimates in regard to the Tabor Home. I just wanted to ask the minister at this point in time, with respect to the H.F. Wiebe Active Living Centre in Winkler—as she knows the city is moving ahead with a \$20-million seniors housing complex that includes both affordable housing units and assisted living units.

But I wanted to ask the minister specifically, in lieu of the fact that the Winkler population has gone up 17 per cent according to StatsCan figures, and the RM of Stanley has gone up 31.8 per cent, is there an opportunity at this point—the project's at a critical juncture—is there an opportunity at this point to come alongside and include, as the city would like to see, an additional 24 beds of supportive housing in that structure?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): As we began to discuss, and admittedly our time was quite brief in Committee of Supply, I am happy to inform the member that I have spoken to the mayor about the issue of their supportive housing project when we visited Morden-Winkler a couple of months ago. And, certainly, he and some of his officials have certainly presented Manitoba Health with an

opportunity, you know, perhaps, an offer we can't refuse, and is very interested in not only seeing the project at Tabor Home, of course, go ahead, but look at what sorts of amendments might happen with the original plans concerning the bed complement as originally announced and planned at Tabor Home, as it might relate to seeing a supportive housing opportunity in the adjacent community.

And so, as I told the member, I know that there is work under way with my officials to look at what options might be available. You know, we do, of course, see a need for increased personal care home beds across the province, so, you know, that option of transferring the 20 supportive housing beds from Tabor, making a 100-bed, fully personal care home bed environment and then moving them over to the other community to fund—we are working that through right now. It is part of the analysis.

As I said to the member, I do appreciate that the communities want an answer to come as swiftly as possible. We—we're working hard to really crunch these numbers. We know that together the projects would represent a net increase of beds for us which had not been originally contained in Estimates in budgets and, you know, I'm not going to sugar-coat it, that that does represent a challenge, but we, nonetheless, are working it up to see what possibilities might exist.

And so, again, I'll reiterate for the member that I'm absolutely committed to get back to him and have my officials speak with the community just as swiftly as they can with any developments and information. But I really did appreciate my conversation with members of the community.

Certainly, they're an excellent, excellent group to work with and have done extraordinary work over the years in fundraising and advocating. So, we really want to try to do the very best that we can there, and I commit to the member to keep him apprised of developments.

Mr. Friesen: I appreciate that response from the minister and I appreciate her understanding of the situation they're in and her understanding of the fact that, really, although it's two challenges, two opportunities, it really, in effect, amounts to one: It comes down to, you know, being able to provide those necessary structures for a community that is experiencing tremendous growth, and I know we shared a bit about that tremendous growth that is taking place in the community right now and I want

to thank the minister for that commitment that her officials are working on this problem.

Could the minister, then, just additionally indicate whether—could she indicate if there is a timeline she's working on or a date by which she expects to have a decision made with respect both to the H.F. Wiebe centre and the Tabor Home, and possible changes to both of those facilities?

Ms. Oswald: I don't have a date for the member. When I conversed with the deputy on this subject, when we last spoke, he did confirm that that work is actively under way and hopes that it will be done swiftly. But I just can't today give him a specific day, I'm afraid.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Can the minister tell us whether all of the mammography machines in Manitoba are now accredited?

I'm just asking if the Minister of Health could indicate whether all of the mammography machines in Manitoba are now accredited.

Ms. Oswald: Yes, Mr. Chair, I'll have to confirm with the member. I know that we worked to pass legislation to ensure that we see accreditation across the board, so I will seek that information to provide confirmation for the member.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate whether or not CancerCare has been successful in lobbying the government for a digital mammography machine?

Ms. Oswald: Yes, Mr. Chair, I need to refresh my memory there. Certainly, we know that we want to ensure the best possible opportunities for detection of breast cancer, diagnosis, and ensuring women that get on the road to early intervention. We did commit during the 2011 election to expand the Breast Health Centre in Winnipeg and to move to an upgrade of new digital mammography equipment, and that work and planning is under way.

Mrs. Driedger: I'm curious. Knowing that CancerCare Manitoba has been asking for that for some time, because it is the new standard of care in breast screening in the world, and I would note that Newfoundland already has 14 digital mammography machines, so could the minister tell us when Manitoba might see their first digital mammography machine?

Ms. Oswald: Certainly, as I say, we did make that commitment during the election campaign. We're working with our officials at CancerCare Manitoba and certainly within the Department of Health. We're

working also on a number of other significant initiatives concerning cancer patients, and so I will endeavour to provide a sense of timeline for the member specifically on the digital mammography machines. I don't have that particular timeline with me in the House today.

Mrs. Driedger: One of the other line items from the supplementary Estimates book was related to equipment purchases and replacements, and I note that there's actually—and it's in—I guess my question—I would note that—and I expect that I—the government is going to probably borrow money in order to purchase equipment because that appears to be how they go about funding equipment and capital. Is that going to be the method of purchase for a digital mammography machine?

Ms. Oswald: Yes, in the absence of having direct advice from our chief financial officer, you know, I certainly will endeavour to confirm for the member, but I can let the member know that we have a specialized equipment fund. We have increased that fund over the time that we've been in government, and so it is set aside each year.

And so whether or not the digital mammography machines would come from that fund or from another source, I would need to confirm, but I know that, traditionally, diagnostic equipment across facilities certainly has come from that fund. And so I would need to seek specifics concerning what the funding source would be for that. But, traditionally, much of the DI funding has come from the specialized equipment fund.

* (15:50)

And I would hasten to add that we have, over time, seen really, you know, non-partisan, really useful partnerships with the federal government. There was a partnership with the former Liberal government. There was a partnership with the current Conservative government where, you know, there may be a lot of debate about various ways of funding health care and, you know, health capital.

And we've seen some decisions from the federal government on excluding health capital that, personally, I didn't find altogether helpful, but from either political group there was, in past, a national specialized equipment fund that each province made really good use of.

And, you know, if there was anything, you know, if there was some influence with folks across the way, or if you were ever asked a question, you

know, what is one thing that we could really be working on concerning funding health care in Manitoba and the other provinces?

Well, I guess, the No. 1 answer would be, you know, the development of a really blockbuster health accord. A very close second would be, in my view, the re-establishment or created a new specialized equipment fund that would give every province just a little more room to make some advances, and I think the federal government has deserved a lot of credit in the past in the creation of this fund. There have been some decisions recently to not proceed with that fund, but I really think the resurrection of that could be of great, great benefit, and I would just put that forward for the member. It's honestly something I think we could stand together on.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate whether or not Manitoba is any closer to having a specialized stroke unit at one of the tertiary care hospitals?

Ms. Oswald: I thank the member for the question, because this is an area that I know that we're both keenly interested in. We really do think that we have the opportunity to continue to work to improve and enhance stroke care in Manitoba. We have already launched the integrated stroke project which involves sending all patients with symptoms of stroke to HSC, St. Boniface or Brandon where they can immediately have access to a CT scan.

Of course, the inclusion of the STARS helicopter has been critically important in enabling us to move patients faster and, of course, we know that getting to these stroke centres more quickly has enabled us to have doctors make an assessment in concert with paramedics and other health professionals regarding using tPA—I know the member knows what that is—clot busting drugs.

We have seen that our 28-day readmission rates for stroke patients are among the best in Canada, below the national average, and so we know from this that stroke patients in Manitoba are receiving the stroke care and post-stroke care that they need to rehabilitate and recover.

We've also seen some other measures concerning stroke that are very favourable, but we do have medical professionals that continue to advocate for enhanced services for stroke. There is some debate still, I think, among them about a specific stroke centre or having more spread out stroke centres, and I'm actively engaged in learning more about what the best path for Manitoba would be. We

do see stroke centres in other jurisdictions that may or may not be measuring outcomes as well as Manitoba, but one of the things that the experts that speak with my officials and with me don't have any debate on is how important it is, also, that we're focusing on prevention and healthy living to prevent them in the first place as best as possible.

So we've seen a 25 per cent decrease in the amount of Manitobans who are suffering strokes, but without a doubt we know there's more work to do. A specific stroke centre of excellence remains a part of our discussion. The—in the summer of 2011, we launched the Manitoba Stroke Strategy and I know that—at least I think I know, that the member has quite a lot of experience in her career in this area, and so I'm interested in continuing to hear her advice on going forward.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister tell us when we might expect to see paramedics and massage therapists become regulated in Manitoba?

Ms. Oswald: Yes, Mr. Chair, as the member knows, we passed The Regulated Health Professions Act some time back and sections of that act remain to be proclaimed.

We know that there is much work going on with our health professions to finish developing the regulations that are extensive, but sections of the act that have been proclaimed include the Health Professions Advisory Council, which has, as one of its principal tasks, reviewing applications for—from the professions that are not currently regulated health professions to become a regulated health profession.

That committee has before it now an application from the paramedics and in—and I believe has an application, if it's not already in front of them it's very close, from the massage therapists. I think it's in front of them already and they are deliberating, doing their work, gathering their information and evidence as part of that process.

Interested parties are able to present or to provide a brief to that committee to share their views about a potential profession that is seeking to become a regulated profession. And so that work is going on right now.

I would have to check in with the committee on their current progress, to get a sense of what kind of a timeline might exist. I can tell the member that there is a load of work yet to be done on both of those, so it isn't imminent but I certainly can say that work is under way.

Mrs. Driedger: Can external groups come in and make a presentation to that committee and actually work against the application by any group that comes forward that wants to be regulated?

Ms. Oswald: Yes, they can.

Mrs. Driedger: Who will make that final decision then? Because we are talking about what is in the best interests of patient safety. So does that committee have final say, or does the minister?

Ms. Oswald: The committee is tasked with making these recommendations and these analyses and their central role concerns protecting the public and working in the best interests of Manitobans.

And you know, I think if we cut right to it, we can speak about the fact that over the decades, this has been a highly charged political discussion at times, perhaps inappropriately so. And part of the creation of the Health Professions Advisory Council was to endeavour to take politics out of the discussion and really ensure that the best interest of Manitobans is what is being discussed and analyzed; making sure that there is no doubt that the role of a college is centrally to protect the public, not to protect its members.

It's why there are other provisions in that act that separated the role of associations from the colleges. And so the Health Professions Advisory Council, while new in Manitoba, you know, and is finding its way, it does have, as its role, the analysis and the offering of best advice to the minister and I will take that advice, or the minister after me will take that advice very seriously because it is about the safety of patients in Manitoba.

* (16:00)

Mrs. Driedger: I've always been curious, I—about the nursing Recruitment and Retention Fund. When it was first set up in 1999, it was set up with \$7 million and then, since then, it has dropped off and now it's sitting at \$3.7 million.

Can the minister tell us why the amount has been decreased over the years?

Ms. Oswald: Well, the member's going to think I'm just being cheeky in answering this, but the truth is that there were a lot of nurses to recruit back at the beginning. And so, there—the fund was extensive at that time and a lot of work was done to repatriate nurses that had left and to encourage nurses into the profession. And we have seen that fund change and used in a variety of different ways. We get really

good advice from our nursing professionals about how we can use that fund to support education, to support professional development, how we can use that fund to provide additional areas of security for nurses, and so, you know, we believe that the fund is in a place that is solid. It's vibrant and dynamic, but, you know, we'll continue to take advice from the front-line nurses in ways that we can be created and provide opportunities to enhance their profession and to enhance their ability to retain nurses in a variety of areas.

I can tell the member that, in my time in the chair, there were times when there was a greater focus on the NRRF fund, and recently there's been a greater emphasis on working together on a project that was initially launched by the federal government—for which I commend them—that they were funding projects to really enable nurses to do some innovative work across the nursing profession, and Manitoba's was in the area of long-term care. And they really did some terrific work. Regrettably, the sun has set on that fund, but we have committed to our nurses that we're going to continue to try to expand that good work that has been started. So that really has been more of our emphasis now, but, again, we believe that we need to be constantly making investments in retaining and recruiting our nurses and—which is why we've maintained that fund. But it has dropped from a time when there was significant repatriation to be done.

Mrs. Driedger: When the minister made the announcement about the birthing centre, all that was ever mentioned, and has ever been mentioned, about it was that the birthing centre was planned to have up to 500 births a year. So the impression it certainly left out there—quite deliberately, I'm sure—is that we would be in the area of 500 births a year. When asked about it recently, the minister is indicating that in the first year, she only actually expected 100 births.

Can she tell me where she got that number from?

Ms. Oswald: Yes, and again I would say to the member that, really, from discussions very early on with the Women's Health Clinic—who I would pause to say deserve incredible credit for their advocacy and their championing of the development of the Birth Centre along with Manitoba's midwives—very early on in the discussions—and, you know, I don't know if it was captured in a sound bite or whatever, but very early on, the Women's Health Clinic and Manitoba Health were saying that we wanted to

build the capacity to 500 births a year, but there was never an expectation that all those 500 babies would come in year one. We know very well that—well, at least, I know and I feel 99 per cent sure that the member opposite knows—that the women develop a birth plan, you know, with their midwives or physicians or whatever, and are not always, you know, super interested in deviating from that plan.

And so we know that as new moms came into the discussion once the Birth Centre was open that it—we were estimated to expect a hundred in the first year and that that would ramp up. So I know the member says we never talked about it, but I talked about it a lot and so did the Women's Health Clinic. That was always the expectation, and we were perfectly fine with that.

Mrs. Driedger: When I look at the Women's Health Clinic program proposal and role statement, they, actually, in year one, anticipated 220 births and then working up every year after that. There's never any mention in any of their documents that I have seen where it talked about a hundred. They talked about 220 in the first year. So when the minister is talking about a hundred a year, and that we're on track to meet that hundred, she really is quite off the mark, because they're actually saying in their document that they expected 220. So, I'm going to believe what the proposal said, and the role statement said, because it is based on some very good work by the Women's Health Clinic.

So, again, I'll ask the minister, because she is right—you know, quite off the mark from what is in their document. Where does she get the hundred from in her response in question period last month?

Ms. Oswald: Well, again, we've had years of discussions with the Women's Health Clinic, with health professionals, with Manitoba Health, as we've worked to develop the Birth Centre. There have been a variety of documents and estimates and proposals.

And so, you know, I'm not going to dispute if there is an iteration out there speaking the language of 220 births, but certainly since the shovel was in the ground and discussion was under way concerning the employment of midwives, the hiring of midwives, the developing of the program, my understanding has been that the landed-upon number for year one was 100. And so, you know, I'm not going to dispute that there may be a document from, you know, over time that talked about 220, but the language of 100 in the first year is the language that we've been speaking for quite some time. So, I mean,

I submit that, you know, we can respectfully agree to disagree, but we've been talking about a hundred for a while.

Mrs. Driedger: But can the minister table the document that she says references this statement of a hundred a year?

Ms. Oswald: I don't think I said there was a document, Mr. Chair. I can say that in my meetings with the Women's Health Clinic in various discussions that that was the number. So I could look back and reflect to see if indeed they have a document that cites 100. It's not a document that they've shown to me, it's just the number that we've been working with for quite some time.

Mr. Mohinder Saran, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister explain why the Misericordia Health Centre wouldn't have a nurse practitioner hired there for the Urgent Care Centre?

Ms. Oswald: I'm sorry, I didn't hear the beginning. Did you say the Misericordia Health Centre? Could you just ask me the question again in full, if you wouldn't mind? Thank you.

Mrs. Driedger: Yes, my question to the minister was: Why is it that the Misericordia Health Centre does not have a nurse practitioner?

Ms. Oswald: I'll have to investigate, Mr. Speaker, as to what kinds of requests came from Misericordia if indeed there was a request for the placement of a nurse practitioner that has either not yet been funded or not yet been filled. I'd have to double-check and do some research and get back to the member on that.

Mrs. Driedger: The minister indicates in numerous conversations that they've increased the medical graduates to 110 a year, and so she's left the impression that that is actually what's happening.

Can the minister tell us if there has ever been 110 doctors graduate every year since they made the announcement?

* (16:10)

Ms. Oswald: To clarify, Mr. Chair, we have spoken about the fact that we've increased the seats in medical school to 110, and I am not certain whether or not time has elapsed. I think that there's been two years, two or three years, now, where there were opportunities for the full 110 to graduate. I might be off on that. I'll double-check in terms of how long it

takes to grow a doctor. I'm not sure if a full 110 have completed their journey. But, certainly, what I have said, repeatedly, is that we reversed decisions that were made under the opposition's watch to decrease the number of seats in medical school from 85 to 70. We restored those 15 to get back to 85. We then increased to get to 100 and then added an additional 10 to get to 110.

So I don't believe that I have said there have been graduates. I've said that we've funded the seats and, certainly, we are graduating more students in Manitoba, I think, than we ever have before but, certainly, in decades. But I would need to double-check to see if, in fact, a graduating class has been at a full 110. I believe we've been over 100 for sure, but I don't know if it's been 110 on 110. I'd have to double-check.

Mrs. Driedger: I have a specific issue that was brought to me by a mom that lives in central region health authority, and she has a son who's in grade 1. He was referred by his school speech language pathologist for a hearing test and a central auditory processing test, and both of those tests are done by an audiologist. So in April he had a hearing test at the Winnipeg Hearing Centre, and the audiologist that they dealt with referred them on to get a central auditory processing test. But he indicated that the only place in Winnipeg that offers this test is at the Seven Oaks hearing centre and they said that this boy would be referred to this centre for the test. A few days later, the audiologist from the Winnipeg Hearing Centre contacted the mom and indicated that because they lived outside of Winnipeg that they would not be accepted by Seven Oaks for this test. They were told that only people that live within Winnipeg's regional health authority are accepted at this location. He also said he was not aware of any other locations that offer this test, so that if the family wanted to get the test done they would need to go to a private clinic and pay for the tests themselves at a cost of \$450. The mom checked further and, indeed, the regional director for central health authority spoke to the head audiologist at the WRHA who told her that they are not accepting patients from other regions because the wait-list in the WRHA is already really long at a year.

So central doesn't offer the test. If the family wants it they're going to have to go to a private clinic and pay \$450. What the mom is concerned about is the inequality of care offered, well, not offered, I guess. There is inequality of care between rural and urban because everybody in rural Manitoba is forced

to go to a private clinic at the cost of \$450 while people in Winnipeg can have that test done for free.

So the mom has asked me to bring this up with the minister and to ask what the minister is prepared to do to deal with this inequality.

Ms. Oswald: And I thank the member for bringing this issue forward and, certainly, if the family, the mom is comfortable in sharing her contact information, we certainly would like to get in touch with her, as well, to talk about what options might be available to her.

This issue has been raised with me in the not too distant past, and we have certainly asked the deputy to work with our regional health authorities at looking at options that will be available to those that are living in rural and northern Manitoban–Manitoba to try to broaden our access to a variety of tests which, indeed, would mean looking at the options for enabling those living in rural environments to access tests that are available in Winnipeg.

We have seen our audiologist workforce grow by about 30 per cent since 2003. Our percentage of audiologists per capita is, you know, roughly second in Canada, and we've also—see Manitoba having the second highest percentage of speech language pathologists per capita in Canada; I think we're behind Alberta in that respect. But the member raises, I think, a really important issue on which we need to do more work, without a doubt. This—there is an area here where I think that we need to—in the context of having that percentage of professionals available to us in Manitoba, I think we need to look at new and innovative ways that we may be able to harness the good work that they do to enable increased access.

So I take the member's question very seriously, and, again, if she gets the consent of that family to share that information with me, I want to assure her that I'll do my very best to endeavour to support this family in getting access to what they need. I do believe we have more work to do in this area and we need to be innovative in doing that, and we want to be able to provide as broad access as we can. So I thank the member for the question.

Mrs. Driedger: Yes. A question related to that—and I certainly will refer the mom to the minister because I think the family does want to see some resolution to this, and they want to see, you know, a fairness in the system. And if Winnipeggers don't have to pay, would they—you know, is the minister looking at one

of the options as being, you know, government paying to have rural patients who have to go to a private clinic, would—is the government then prepared to pay for that cost?

Ms. Oswald: As I said to the member, we're looking at a variety of options with our professionals in the field and in Winnipeg specifically, and looking at different models that we can be using. We're looking at availability—excuse me—of different funding patterns and how that can work. So really, we're doing a wholesale assessment of how we can improve that access. And certainly that's one of the questions that's going to be discussed, without a doubt.

Mrs. Driedger: I'd like to ask the minister some questions about the Middlechurch care home, and I have information that has been given to me that raises some concerns. And I understand that some of this was covered on a CBC news report by the I-Team, that a whistle-blower had come forward with possible financial irregularities. I want to ask the minister, considering some of the claims brought forward by that whistle-blower, why was this not forwarded to the police?

Ms. Oswald: And, you know, certainly the member's questions are timely, particularly in light of some of the discussions we've been having over the last couple of days regarding endeavouring to increase accountability and transparency across our regional health authorities and including health corporations and personal care homes and so forth. And while on one side of the coin, we have groups, highly respected and excellent faith-based groups, that have objected, you know, very strongly to have any sort of change in the way that funds or salaries or budgets are presented, in ways that they have described as intrusive, I think was one word that we heard last evening. And they have great objections to strong changes in terms of accountability, not because I believe in the main groups are trying to hide things, but because it is a departure from what they have been doing in the past.

* (16:20)

But, on the other side of that coin, of course, we have situations like one that has been presented to the member and certainly presented to me and thoroughly reviewed by not only the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, but the Ombudsman's office as well, where there have been, you know, very concerning allegations made about leadership, about use of funds, about manipulation of funds, and

it certainly does inspire, I think, anybody in this Legislature to want to ensure that the highest standard of transparency and accountability is taking place.

So really in the hours ahead of us, we're really working to strike that balance for the—for some of the reasons that the member may be well aware of and that was presented in the media, as well as taking to account the very real concerns about autonomy that our faith-based organizations have raised. So it's a delicate balance as we're going forward. I can tell the member that last fall the WRHA was notified about concerns regarding some financial practices at Middlechurch. They acted on them swiftly, conducted an audit, which was turned over to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman office is working and reviewing the case.

It's my understanding, I may stand to be corrected on this, but my most recent information is that the Ombudsman has not yet ruled on the case. I think it's still outstanding, and I want to be absolutely clear for patients and families that the review that the Ombudsman office is doing and the audit that was done, it was not concerning patient care at Middlechurch. So families that have heard about this or may be hearing about this, I want to provide them that assurance.

We think that there are a lot of very positive things that have been going on at Middlechurch. For example, they were a site of an innovative trial concerning the use of anti-psychotic drugs by PCH residents. And, after that six-month trial, they found that using a very innovative dementia education program, they were able to reduce the use of anti-psychotics at Middlechurch by 20 per cent.

So I also would like to say that, notwithstanding the fact that there are some serious investigations that have been done and that are currently being done, I don't want to paint everybody at Middlechurch with the same brush. At the present time it is my understanding that there is not a police investigation taking place, but I also understand that that has not been ruled out. And so I want to assure the member that the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, my department are paying very close attention to this and will respect, of course, the sage advice that will come from the office of the Ombudsman. And, if it's appropriate to take that next step, then that's exactly what shall be done.

Mrs. Driedger: Just a final couple questions, can the Minister of Health indicate when she went to the Jets

game, whose ticket did she use? Who gave her the ticket?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Chair, I think I went to five games. The feminist in me doesn't want to say that my husband gave me the tickets, but he did.

Mrs. Driedger: Did the minister ever get a ticket from the Minister of Justice?

Ms. Oswald: No.

Mrs. Driedger: Did the minister ever sit next to the Minister of Justice or in that—close by at one of the games, using one of his tickets?

Ms. Oswald: Now the member has asked me this question before, sort of informally. I found it an odd question. I told her no. She's asking me again. Whoever was sitting there must have been extremely good-looking, but it was not me.

Mrs. Driedger: I am finished my questions with this minister.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I would like to put some questions to the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism.

The Acting Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Okay. Honourable member for Morris?

Mrs. Taillieu: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm wondering if the minister can indicate if she has received notice from the Ombudsman that she will be investigated regarding her involvement in partisanship with the civil service.

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism): No, I have not.

Mrs. Taillieu: Has the minister advised—been advised that her deputy minister has received that letter?

Ms. Melnick: I have not been advised that a letter has been received.

Mrs. Taillieu: Have you been advised that there will be an investigation by the Ombudsman?

Ms. Melnick: I have been advised that the Ombudsman is looking into something.

Mrs. Taillieu: So we're to understand that you are advised that the Ombudsman is looking into something. What would that something be?

Ms. Melnick: Well, I haven't received a letter from the Ombudsman, so it may be appropriate to wait until that time.

Mrs. Taillieu: Can the minister tell us who advised her, then, or informed her that there would be an investigation by the Ombudsman?

Ms. Melnick: Yes. I was advised by the deputy that the Ombudsman might be looking into this.

Mrs. Taillieu: And the deputy did not indicate that he'd received a letter?

Ms. Melnick: No.

Mrs. Taillieu: I was advised that the Ombudsman was sending a letter to the deputy minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism and that the matter of—that was brought to them by a private citizen would be the subject of an investigation because they were going to investigate the involvement of the civil service in partisanship as has been alleged to be happened—to have happened under this minister.

I'm wondering then, with this pending, if the minister intends to co-operate and provide a full listing of who received the emails that were sent directing people to come down to the Legislature, and will she also be forthcoming in her involvement in directing who was going to be sending these emails and what they were going to say?

Ms. Melnick: Mr. Chair, I'll await, if there is a letter coming from the Ombudsman, and we'll recognize the needs of what the Ombudsman is asking for, but I think it's better to wait until a letter is actually received and carry through with the proper process rather than deal with surmise. This is an issue taken very seriously, and I think we need to deal with it respectfully and fully recognize what is necessary in the process and take those steps. So I'm not going to get into a 'surmisal' of if, when, who, what. I think it's important, if there's an issue here to be dealt with, that we go through the proper process.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, I agree that the proper process should be followed here, and I think that if there is an investigation going to be conducted by the Ombudsman, and that is the information that I've received, then I was just asking if the minister will co-operate in all aspects of questioning from the Ombudsman?

* (16:30)

Ms. Melnick: Mr. Chair, a letter, to my knowledge, has not been received yet, and I think we need to recognize the seriousness of this issue and not surmise. Certainly, if and when a letter does come, we'll take it very seriously and deal with it appropriately.

Mrs. Taillieu: I would advise the minister to go to her deputy minister and check to see if he did not receive the letter, but it's interesting that she knows—that she's been informed, actually, that there is going to an investigation, but she keeps stalling and saying she's waiting for a formal letter, although she knows that there is going to be an investigation. She admitted that. So I'm simply asking her if she'll comply with the Ombudsman in the investigation.

Ms. Melnick: Well, again, the member for Morris is jumping all over the place. What I said was I knew that the Ombudsman was looking into something, that I have not received a letter, and that I prefer to respect proper process rather than surmise here.

The member for Morris is talking about having heard from someone something about this. It's better not to deal with the shadows, Mr. Speaker, it's better not to deal with 'surmisal'. It's much better to deal with proper process, and that's what we'll be doing.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Chair, and it's certainly obvious that the minister will intend to stall and not provide answers to the Ombudsman, just the way she's done to the public and to this House. So that's pretty obvious. She's put that on the record.

But what would we expect from this minister, Mr. Speaker, the one that politicizes the civil service to do her own bidding, her political will, bringing people down to the Legislature for—just for her own political purposes, circulates emails, not only to her staff but asks her staff to forward these to their contact list.

I'm looking at an email right now and, in fact, I should just confirm for the House that we did receive, through a freedom of information request, even though it came late, we did embarrass the minister into providing it and she has provided it. But we can see a lot more information in this email than she was forthcoming with. We see a lot of names here. We see a lot of information about people within the department who received the email and forwarded it on, Mr. Speaker.

And in one case, an email says, Benjamin, Colin, and Cynthia will be distributing a slightly updated version of the attached messages to businesses.

I'm asking the minister: What businesses would she have forwarded this email to?

Ms. Melnick: Well, again, we have the member for Morris making suggestive statements in the House

about co-operation, making suggestive statements in the House about all kinds of things.

Again, there's a process to be followed. We'll be, you know, following that process, and I think it's really best not to go on the 'surmisal' route, Mr. Speaker. Again, the member's saying, you know, information being withheld and whatnot. That's not the case at all.

I think that it's important to recognize that if there is action taken by the Ombudsman, that we follow that process, that there not be 'surmisals', suggestive statements, such as the member for Morris—is putting on record here today, Mr. Speaker. It's really important that a process be respected, and I know the member for Morris is, you know, wanting to score some points here, but I think it's more important that we follow the proper process.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Chair, what I am doing is I'm actually reading from information provided through a freedom of information request, which has given us some of the emails and some of the people that received the emails. And when I refer to emails, these emails were emails directed by the minister, through her assistant deputy minister, to go through staff and have those staff forward that email to a variety of people, and it says here, businesses, ethnocultural, and service provider and related stakeholder distribution lists.

And so it's really important, I think, here to determine who businesses were, who were related stakeholder distribution list, because if these are further civil servants within the organization, then, that's very significant. If they're not, she should have no problem in providing that information which clears her and actually substantiates what she's been claiming—that it's only community organizations that have received this. But if she won't provide the information, it clearly is something that she intends to keep hiding.

So, I'm asking her to just come clean about it. Tell us who the businesses were. Tell us who the stakeholder distribution lists are and then we'll know.

Ms. Melnick: Well, again, we've talked about the department communicating with stakeholders. We've talked about the department letting folks who had wanted to know about what was happening. There was a—I mean, I can go through all this again. I've answered this question, but I can go through it again when—talk about the unilateral decision by the federal government to cancel the Settlement Services

annex with less than 36 hours' notice of the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement. People were wanting to know what was happening. People were very concerned. People were wanting to be kept up to date. The department communicated with people, communicated with a variety of folks.

Again I don't have the document in front of me that the member is referring to, and I know she'll say, oh, it came from my office. It didn't come from my office. If it came through a FIPPA—and I know that she has been really up on wanting to have information shared, but is not necessarily wanting to share information herself. The basic important fact here is that the Settlement Services annex was cancelled unilaterally without discussion, without negotiation. This is the Manitoba model; it's a model that other provinces are wanting—the council—the federation is wanting.

The focus here is the future economy of the province of Manitoba, and that is what we are focusing on in our concerns around immigration, making sure that we keep the same model. One of the areas also that there's been information put out that hasn't been particularly accurate—and I just want to correct the record on that—is about provincial funding for immigration services. And there has been information circulated publically that has said the Province only provides just over a million dollars a year on immigration services.

So, just while we have a moment, I'll just put on the record that the provincial government spends \$20 million-plus every year directly on education, housing, health, family services and training to support new Canadians, of which our Settlement Services agreement with the federal government is just a small part. Those direct investments are crucial; many of them are long term. The education, housing, health, et cetera, are long-term commitments by the Province to newcomers.

And I can give a few specific numbers—figures—dollar figures of provincial funding in 2011-12, which is approximately \$21.1 million: \$7.8 million will be spent through Immigration and Multiculturalism alone, which includes funding for Manitoba START, qualification recognition and gap-bridging programs and also office of the fair commissioner. We were the second jurisdiction in Canada to put in legislation an office of the Fairness Commissioner to help folks who are coming from, again, 140 countries, with—to work through the qualifications recognition process. We're also

working with the—parts of the various organizations that have qualification recognition needs, so we're working on—with both sides to move people through the process as quickly as possible.

* (16:40)

Mr. Chair, \$11.1 million for English as an acquired language for school-age learners that is in partnership with the department of education and literacy. We spent \$1.2 million through Employment Manitoba helping newcomers find jobs, helping newcomers connect with employers. We have Manitoba START, which is available online, and helps people who are thinking of coming to Manitoba find out what the Manitoba environment is, find out whether or not they feel it would be a fit for them, and if they decide that they want to apply to come to Manitoba that they can start connecting right away with employers, with their professional organizations, et cetera. And, of course, a million dollars is spent for the Provincial Nominee business settlement office, which helps people, again, before they get here, and when they get here.

So we have, on the record now, correct information, \$21.1 million to be spent this fiscal year. Just over \$20 million last fiscal year, and, again, a lot of these are long-term commitments. And the real story here is that a hundred thousand people have chosen to come to Manitoba from the some 140 countries around the world. Right now, we have 120 languages being spoken in the province of Manitoba. This is really what's important here. Also, the fact that people are wanting to make sure that their families are able to come and join them and help to form and develop communities, and develop not only culturally focused communities, but the community of Manitoba as a whole.

So immigration, moving the province forward financially, economically, multiculturally, that's really what's important here, Mr. Chair.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Chair, I think the real story here is, first of all, the politicization of the civil service by this minister. It's just unbelievable that she has actually stooped to this level to do that. And, secondly, the information she puts on the record, it's not—doesn't appear anywhere in the Estimates books. But what it does show is what we know is that Immigration is funded 97 per cent by the federal government, and all the federal government is doing here is simply not—there's no funding being cut, they're simply taking over the administration, and I understand that process is rolling out quite well.

So that's the real story here. The real story is \$36 million in funding from the federal government in a total budget of \$38 million. I see that, you know, without the money that would be coming from the federal government, and if that's going to be administered through the federal government, there doesn't appear to be much left in the minister's portfolio. So I'm sure she's quite concerned about that, Mr. Chair.

Also, I note that in the freedom of information request that we got there were so many people named in this information that received the email in question that we're talking about that the access and privacy officer that signed it is Ximena Munoz, the Fairness Commissioner. So they even had to go outside the department to get an access and privacy commissioner—well, she's actually in the department, but outside of the email chain, which included almost every other civil service within—servant within the department, so they had to go beyond that to get someone to sign this, Mr. Chair. So I think that in itself sends a real message that they had to actually go to someone other than the people that are involved in the email list here, because there's so many of them.

But my time is short, Mr. Chair, and I do want to pose some questions of the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Ms. Marcelino), so at this time I have no questions for the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism.

Ms. Melnick: Yes, Mr. Speaker, again, you know, the one phrase missing from that response was once upon a time. We have the member for Morris creating all these conspiracy theories—and, you know, attack, attack, attack.

She stood in the House—you know, talk about politicization, she stood in the House and said she wanted to hand out cheques. And that was her big deal around the whole issue of immigration, and the growing of the financial safety of this province, is she wanted to hand out cheques. And that's on *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, and that's not, you know, hidden in some deep, dark secret.

So, again, the real focus here is the incredible progress that has been made. I mean this was an agreement that was signed by the Filmon administration, the Tory administration of the day, with the Liberal federal administration. It was a good agreement. We thought that the members opposite would stand and support their own agreement. It's a shame that they haven't, and we will continue to

stand up for Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and continue to work with people and continue to talk to people about what is happening. I'm talking to a lot of people in Manitoba. Everyone is concerned about this. Everyone sees this as a Manitoba issue which is what it is and what it needs to be.

And again, in my closing words, I'll invite members opposite to come and join us and stand up for Manitoba.

Mrs. Taillieu: Yes, well, the minister has invited some further questions and comments, Mr. Chair.

Certainly, we know that the minister is touring the province and holding closed-door meetings and scaring new immigrants into believing that if they leave the country, even if they're Canadian citizens, they will never get back in. We heard that in Brandon and, in fact, she even checked before she said that to see if there was any media in the room. She said, are there any media here? Oh, good. I can speak.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

And so she said that, and it was absolutely absurd for her to imply that new immigrants would not get back into this country, even as Canadian citizens, Mr. Chair. That is unbelievable. She knows—we know she's on her fear and schmeat campaign around the province, but we know that people are smarter than that.

We also have heard from other organizations that she has contacted try—to try and get support for her little cause here, and they have seen through that and saw fit not to provide their support for her. We know that what she has done here is she thought she was very—being very cute in doing this, but she was just a little too cute by half with this resolution, Mr. Chair, because she went out. She knows full well—she went to a number of organizations and asked for their support. They said no.

Then she went to the civil service and said, I have to have people here in the gallery and so I want you to get as many people here as you can. And so her assistant deputy minister, either he did what she asked, which was doing her political bidding, or he acted completely on his own, which I guess then she has surrendered the running of her department for her—to her assistant deputy, whichever way. And, secondly, if he's done it on his own and has actually been socialized, I guess, into believing that the NDP way is the only way, Mr. Speaker, that is outrageous in itself because the civil servants are to be non-

partisan and that is democracy in this province. They are to serve everyone and not their political masters.

So what she did was she asked her assistant deputy minister to go and find people to come to the gallery, and he did that. And he went to every other person in his department with an email and instructing them to please send out this email to your distribution lists. That included businesses, stakeholders, as well as the settlement services groups, but we know there are lots of settlement services groups. But we don't know exactly who got the email and whether there were other people within the Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism, other civil servants, or it could have even gone further than that. Perhaps it went to Culture, Heritage and Tourism. Perhaps it went there. Perhaps it went all over government. We don't know.

We're simply asking the minister to come clean and provide the information. If there's nothing to hide, then she would be quite happy to provide it, but when she doesn't provide it it simply makes us believe that she's hiding it and she won't provide it. We know we just asked her about whether she'd co-operate with the Ombudsman in the review that they are suggesting they're going to do, and she wouldn't admit that she wouldn't do that. She would not say today whether she would actually comply with the Ombudsman's request and provide the information.

* (16:50)

So what we're seeing here is a complete misleading of the public into trying to make the public believe that the PNP program will be gone and that is absolutely not true. The—and I'm reading from a statement made by a federal minister: The proposed administrative change has nothing to do with the Manitoba PNP.

We know that, and she knows that full well. She also knows that there'll be no change in funding for the settlement services; it's just who's going to be administering the funding. So I know the minister would like to be the one handing out the cheques. And, certainly, you know, she says: I'm handing out cheques? I don't hand out cheques; I don't have any cheques to hand out. So I don't know what she's talking about.

It doesn't—nothing to do with me, it has everything to do with her, as the minister. So I know that she would like to take the money from the federal government and put her stamp on it and then

further it. I get why she wants to do that, but—and I can understand her fighting very strongly for this because, I know and she knows, that there's not going to be much left with—in her department.

So what is going to happen to her? Is she going to be a minister of nothing? Or is she going to be—is her department going to be rolled into something else? Or what's going to happen? I'm sure she's quite concerned about her future, you know; it seems to me that's what—that she would be.

But I'm actually looking forward to the Ombudsman providing information on this. And I'm certainly hoping that the minister will go back to her assistant deputy minister and ask him what he knows about what the Ombudsman's investigation will be, and if he knows anything further, if he'll provide that to her. Certainly, I would expect, as minister of a department, she would expect her deputy minister to be informing her of everything and keeping her involved. But perhaps it's the other way around; she directs everything in her department, including what her assistant deputy minister of Immigration will do and in co-opting the other civil servants to do her political bidding. So I'm really hoping that she will do that and that she will co-operate and will provide some answers.

I know that she doesn't want to provide any answers here today; simply doesn't choose to. I don't know why she's afraid to do that. If she—as she has said to media in the scrum many times, it's just community organizations.

If that's all it is, she should be happy to provide all of the community organizations, and then we would be happy to see what those organizations were. But, if there are other people, then we would like to know, and if she can provide that, that would be great. Otherwise, I guess we'll have to wait until the Ombudsman forces her to do that.

Ms. Melnick: That's fine. I just want to clarify I had been speaking for an hour at that meeting. The reason I asked if there was press in the room is that other people were going to begin to speak and I wanted to make sure they felt very safe and secure in saying what they had to say. I did it out of respect for people in that room. I didn't do it out of fear. I did it recognizing that, on the issue of immigration and people wanting to bring families, et cetera, things can become quite emotional. And, if there was press in the room, I wanted people to know that and I wanted them to feel safe in whatever information they were sharing. And that's my comment for today.

Mrs. Taillieu: Just to let the table know, and for reference for the ministers that have been called here, we are releasing the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) and the Minister of Immigration (Ms. Melnick).

I only have a few more minutes with the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, so I would like to recall her tomorrow. If that's—along with the tabled list that I provided earlier today.

So, I'd like to just pose some questions of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and Tourism. I'm going to start, I think, with some questions on tourism.

Can the minister tell me the number of visitors that would have been visiting our province in the last year and approximately how much they would spend while they were here?

Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I thank the honourable member for the question.

I would like to reference Statistics Canada data on the tourism industry in Manitoba. According to Stats Canada, tourism in Manitoba represents about 2.75 of GDP and generates \$1.2 billion in expenditures. As well, tourism generates \$238.2 million in provincial tax revenues and it

supports, directly, 5,676 businesses and generates about 13,100 jobs in Manitoba.

I'm just looking for the figures on the number of tourists. If the member has another question while I'm looking at those figures—if you have another question, other—while I'm looking for the figures on tourism visitation.

Mrs. Taillieu: Has Manitoba adopted It's Manitoba Time as its slogan?

Ms. Marcelino: Thank you for the question.

Travel Manitoba has ably marketed their province, both domestically and internationally, since its inception in 2005. And, it has had—has been—the agency has been responsible for marketing Manitoba to tourists and increased the number of tourist visits to, and within, our province.

In 9—in 2012, Travel Manitoba is launching a new print publication to replace three earlier publications, *The Manitoba Vacation Guide*, which included summer and winter edition—

Mr. Chairperson: Order. The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 12, 2012

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