

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
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<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 30, 2013

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Good morning, Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of the House to proceed to Bill 203, The Participation of Manitoba in the New West Partnership Act, sponsored by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

House Business

Mr. Speaker: Prior to proceeding to consideration of Bill 203, I wish to draw to the attention of the House, at the adjournment hour yesterday, we were in consideration of how to rectify the situation of bills 2 and 6, that were standing in the name of the former member for Morris. And I'd like to have some direction from the House on how we wish to proceed with those bills.

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it was my advice yesterday, although it probably wasn't very articulate, that the debate on those bills remain open.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to allow those two bills to remain open for debate? *[Agreed]*

* * *

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed with Bill 203. Is there will of the House to proceed to Bill 203 directly? *[Agreed]*

We'll now proceed to Bill 203, The Participation of Manitoba in the New West Partnership Act.

**Bill 203—The Participation of Manitoba in the
New West Partnership Act**

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook), that the Bill 203, The Participation of Manitoba in the New West Partnership Act, be now read a second time and be referred to committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise to speak to this today. It's a very important bill and important to all Manitobans and to the economy of Manitoba as well as to the economy of Canada.

In an era focused on international free trade, it seems 'incongruous' that Canada has so many international barriers that impede—or internal barriers that impede movements of goods, services and people between provinces. There's a situation that has to change if this country is to be a global marketplace competitor, says Perrin Beatty, a former Conservative president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Speaker, those are words that we should be taking very, very seriously, and when we see that western Canada has formed a partnership—they formed a partnership with BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan, and Manitoba has refused to join that partnership. We don't know why we aren't in the partnership, but we certainly do know the benefits that this partnership would accrue to all of Manitobans in many economic ways, and the growth of our province would probably be exponential.

We also know that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) of this province has repeatedly pointed out at Manitoba's participation in a—in national, rather than regional, trade blocs as an excuse for not joining the New West Partnership. But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that we have not had an impact nationally for some time. The Premier of our province now is rated as the worst economic premier in the province. And so then it's little wonder that we have a situation where Saskatchewan doesn't want us, Alberta doesn't want us and BC doesn't want us. That's unfortunate for all of Manitobans because our success—the success of our businesses, the success of our workers to stay in

Manitoba, depends on being part of an organization such as the New West Partnership.

There's other developments in our province as well that rely on that type of an investment, that type of a partnership, and—for instance, we have a budding business, CentrePort, and the trade that goes with CentrePort will rely heavily on the co-operation of the other provinces in Canada, more especially those in western Canada.

We also have something to offer these other provinces, not just with CentrePort, but also with Churchill as being another port that they can access. People from Saskatchewan could well access that port in Saskatchewan—or in Manitoba, in Churchill, but work through that free trade zone that's in CentrePort. That's important that we work and expand this for the betterment of all of Manitobans.

* (10:10)

For our small businesses right now, we're at a very competitive disadvantage when we look at the buying power that the provinces to our west have. The combined buying power that they have and the combined influence they have on trade is huge, and we're just a small drop in a huge ocean. Right now, Manitoba is—it's not even an island; it's barely a pencil mark in a huge ocean. That's where we are right now. We need to, for economic purposes, join that New West Partnership. It not only improves trade with BC, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, and the rest of the world; it'll also puts us in a common place—procurement and R & D co-operation with the drive—will drive innovation in the three provinces while reducing costs.

It would reduce the cost for the other provinces, but it would give our brainpower in Manitoba the opportunity to expand in innovation and technology. We have the resources of fairly reasonable hydro power at this point, and we need to expand on that. It does look like there is a move afoot by the present government to destroy the advantage that we have with Manitoba Hydro with reasonable rates that we could be using to develop many, many different businesses in the province, and keeping our workers here rather than building and putting the workers to work building something to produce more power that we don't have a sale for, that we cannot sell at a cost-recovery rate, that we sell below production cost and harness and saddle our people and our businesses, our developers in the province, with paying for this out of their back pockets for

generations and generations to come before it can become competitive ever again.

Joining the New West Partnership was a key election commitment in the growing communities' economic strategy platform in 2011 in the provincial election. That was another broken promise, and it would appear that the NDP government has not only broke many, many promises but they have misled the people of Manitoba in many, many ways. They lied to the people in Manitoba. These broken promises turn out to be—they can't all be just mistakes—some of these are planned mistakes, and a planned mistake, Mr. Speaker, I would say is a lie, and that's something that Manitoba shouldn't have to—Manitobans shouldn't have to suffer for that.

The New West Partnership encompasses an economic region of nine million people and has a combined GDP of more than \$550 billion. This is the largest multilateral trade agreement or agreement on trade and labour liberalization that Canada has ever seen. That's a quote from The Globe and Mail on August 3rd, 2010.

We made the commitment—the NDP government made the commitment in 2011 to join the New West Partnership, and then the Premier (Mr. Selinger) of the province says—and again I'll quote that because it's worth quoting: I think we'll always have to find a way to help the whole country to come together. We'll have to find a way to help the whole country come together, and we are the biggest beneficiaries of transfers from all of the other provinces in Canada. We are a welfare province. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, you can't help someone else when you're getting welfare for all of the rest. You can't expect to go out and help them. You don't have the ability to manage what you have in order to make a living without welfare from other provinces. How do you expect to help other ones?

The agreements cover all public sector entities including government ministries and their agencies, boards and commissions, Crown corporations, municipalities, school boards and publicly funded academic, health and social service organizations. Every one of them can benefit. Everyone can benefit from the New West Partnership, and yet our Premier says: No, we want to help everybody. We want to encompass the whole world. We want to encompass all of Canada. Even though we're on welfare, we have grandiose ideas of how we can help the rest of Canada. You can do that with your welfare cheque. No, you can't; you raised the PST. You raised the tax

on so many different products and services in this province, you can't manage your own business and yet you want to help all of Canada. No, let's join an organization that is already in place, already knows how to manage and can bring us a much better economy.

The New West Partnership focuses on trade, international co-operation, innovation and procurement. Those are very, very important things that we seem to not want to be involved in. Manitoba was given the opportunity to join the BC-Alberta investment in labour mobility agreement in 2006, a forerunner to the New West Partnership, but passed on the opportunity despite the fact that Manitoba depends on interprovincial trade more than any other province in Manitoba—or in Canada. They passed up that opportunity and then promised everybody that they're going to do it in 2011—another broken promise, another lie by the NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that everyone in this House support this bill. Thank you very much.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Well, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly a pleasure to stand in the Chamber today to speak about our participation in the Agreement on Internal Trade for Canada that includes not only the partners of the New West Partnership, but it includes the northern territories. It includes our friends to the east. We are talking about an agreement that covers this country coast to coast to coast, not a regional sub-trade agreement that the members opposite seem to be very intent on becoming a part of.

And it's really curious that the member opposite would stand up and talk about a promise to join the New West Partnership. I think he's confused with the campaigns, Mr. Speaker, because it was the members opposite who promised to join the New West Partnership. It was our party that said we are going to continue to work with our partners to the west. We are going to continue to work with our partners to the north and we'll continue to work with our partners to the east. Our Canada includes all provinces and territories. Our focus on trade includes all provinces and territories. And our focus on trade includes an Agreement on Internal Trade that looks at labour mobility across the country, coast to coast to coast, and it—our trade is very strategic and very focused. And that's the—that's what we've been doing and that's what we're going to continue to do. So it's rather curious to listen to the member opposite say that we've promised to do something that we didn't

promise to do, and I think the quote that he was referring to with the—from the Premier (Mr. Selinger) was actually referring to the Agreement on Internal Trade. So perhaps the member opposite should check his facts on that.

But, you know, we've been doing a lot to advance the Agreement on Internal Trade. In fact, I think Manitoba has been a leader on the labour mobility file and has been recognized for that leadership with the work that we've been doing interjurisdictionally to have the recognition of trades across the country through labour mobility and the work that we'll continue to do with our partners to look at foreign credentials and qualifications as we need to meet the labour market demands and work with our partners right across the country.

Now, I recently briefed the member opposite on the next phase, and that, of course, is Bill 11, which is the procedures against the Crown act—Proceedings Against the Crown Amendment Act, I should say—which would bring us into compliance with dispute resolution mechanism outcomes, and that is something that we really hope to have debated as it has proceeded with second reading. We'd like to see that come to the floor and have that approved shortly so that we are in compliance with many other jurisdictions that are in the process of doing so.

And we are among the first to introduce that bill, Mr. Speaker. I believe we were the second or third jurisdiction to introduce that bill to say, yes, we believe in the Agreement on Internal Trade. We believe in the proceedings against the Crown as an appropriate mechanism to resolve dispute resolution and we hope to move that forward.

We were the first to pass labour mobility legislation. We were the first in 2009, and we continue to advance the IT with the legislative amendments, as I just mentioned. When you look at the FPT ministers—trade ministers recently approving amendments to the IT, we're now—allow for full labour mobility for financial services and occupations this year.

And I also explained to the member opposite, when I briefed him on Bill 11, the fact that we've been very successful with a panel hearing that recognized the—that Ontario was not allowing accountants from Manitoba to practise in Ontario, and we challenged it under the Agreement on Internal Trade. The panel ruled in our favour and now that has been rectified, and that's in Ontario. So these are issues that we have to focus on for—in the

best interests of Manitobans from coast to coast to coast, not just focused on a subregional trade agreement.

* (10:20)

Now, the member opposite talked about CentrePort. I'm glad that the member opposite recognized the foreign trade zone, not the free trade zone, but the foreign trade zone that is the largest of its kind in Canada, Mr. Speaker. And we know that that is going to be a critical role in the growth and development of this province of Manitoba.

Trade is an integral part of the economy of this province with a very diverse sector in—very diverse sectors that are involved in trade, whether it is in agriculture, whether it is in ag machinery and equipment, whether it is in the aerospace sector, heavy truck manufacturing, composites, the list goes on and on in terms of the different types of sectors that are engaged in trade in Manitoba. And we are a province that relies very heavily on trade, but not just with our western partners—with our eastern partners, through the north, and to the south. And we are a province that is, I believe, the third least dependent on the United States for trade because we are diversifying our markets, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue to do so. And there are a lot of vehicles that are going to help us in that pursuit.

So I applaud the member for recognizing the importance of CentrePort. It is something that we are very proud to have been a part of in the development of that particular asset here in Manitoba, and we'll continue to be a part of the development of that facility.

And, of course, an Agreement on Internal Trade and labour mobility will be critical to the success of CentrePort; it'll be critical to the success of our manufacturers as they continue to grow and meet the demands of the international market.

When it comes to the markets, we could talk about the west for a while. Manitoba exports 43 per cent of our interprovincial exports into the western provinces. So I would suggest to the member opposite that we already have a very strong integration of western markets, Mr. Speaker, and we're always looking for opportunities to deliver benefits for the province of Manitoba.

And we held a second ever joint Cabinet meeting with Saskatchewan. We signed a memorandum of understanding with Saskatchewan regarding transportation, energy co-operation and

improving transmission grid capacity, which is that low-cost hydro that he was talking about, the fact that on—the fact that Saskatchewan would like some of that low-cost hydro, Mr. Speaker, as well. And they're—you know, as mentioned yesterday, Saskatchewan is, of course, investing a lot in coal and natural—and nuclear power, I believe, but we as a province believe in the future of hydro and we believe that Saskatchewan will be a very good customer for us. So that's one of the MOUs that was signed as well.

Now, let's talk about international trade. We as a province have focused on the BRICS, the—Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and we're also looking at other emerging markets, Mr. Speaker. I've had the pleasure of meeting a number of different ambassadors who know that Manitoba is a good place to do business and a good place to engage in discussions on how we can enhance our trade. But, when you look at the last 10 years, as we've focused on the BRIC countries, we have increased our trade with Brazil, Russia, India and China by 463 per cent in the last 10 years.

We've been working with our partners and the federal government through negotiations with the United States on Buy American, Mr. Speaker.

We're pursuing trading opportunities with Europe by participating in the trade discussions with the comprehensive European trade agreement, Mr. Speaker.

And, of course, it's not just the fact that we have a very diverse economy and a number of manufacturers, Mr. Speaker, who are exporting all over the world. It's also our location, and it's also the infrastructure of CentrePort as mentioned, which will be critical to the expansion of our services—of our trade potentials.

So, you know, it's curious to listen to the member opposite say that we need to be part of a subnational trade relationship and this is going to be the panacea for us, this is going to be the cure-all.

Well, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, we have found through our very diverse economy and the very diverse exports and markets, that we are strategic and working with our manufacturers and the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Manitoba division, to target these markets. We've been very successful. In fact, Agritech, one of the largest agricultural expos in the world, Manitoba's participation has grown in that every year, and the manufacturers that

we have are doing outstanding work. I believe over \$32 million in sales were achieved in that one trade mission alone for these excellent Manitoba companies.

So I think it's important to note that we have been working to provide a very competitive environment with corporate tax cuts, with the foreign trade zone at CentrePort, small-business tax threshold tax increasing, a number of different initiatives that we've brought forward to make for a very competitive province and, of course, the low cost of hydro—as even the member opposite mentioned, having the low cost of hydro is an asset here in Manitoba and we'd like to keep it that way.

So, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we're already pursuing opportunities with our provincial partners through the Agreement on Internal Trade and, again, my Canada includes our friends to the east, to the north and to the west. It includes our friends coast to coast to coast, and we'll continue to work with them for the betterment of Canada, but also for the betterment of Manitoba and opportunities for Manitoba companies.

And I appreciate the opportunity to actually have this debate today because trade is very important for the success of this province and we're going to work to improve and enhance trade in the province of Manitoba.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'm very pleased to follow the minister and speak to this bill before the House today.

And I listened with great attention to the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) who introduced the bill and is highly critical of the—what he perceives as the government's lack of action in this area—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker, I think we have a bit of a reaction here that I'm—have to deal with.

But I want to take some time to explain why the real problem with trade in this province is not the government, but, in fact, it's the opposition and I want to go back a little bit to explain. And, you know, they want to talk about hydroelectricity in this province, and the fact of the matter is that we have been working for many, many years now to develop an east-west power grid in this province. And just a few years ago—matter of fact, November 28, 2008—the CBC reported that Prime Minister Stephen Harper—you know, they know who he is. He

announced in March 2007 that Ontario could use part of its \$586-million share of the \$1.5-billion Canada ecoTrust to begin work on a east-west electrical transmission connection. The Prime Minister in 2007 was suggesting that Ontario use its \$586 million to start the east-west power grid and the Manitoba premier at the time announced that we had \$54 million set aside for the project.

And the question I've always asked is: Where is the opposition in all of this? Where are the Conservative MPs from Manitoba? Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you would be surprised, mildly surprised and amused to know that only one MP, Mr. Steven Fletcher, from the Conservative side has actually promoted this idea and has actually done something, unlike the opposition, unlike the other MPs who came in here last year to press the government on another issue. Where are they? They've been there for years. We haven't heard a word about the east-west power grid.

So they like to take shots at hydro and the issue of—matter of fact, they want to stop the development of hydro. The minister explained just yesterday how Saskatchewan is going to spend \$15 billion on oil and gas power generation, and here we're spending \$20 billion on hydro, clean hydro power. And somehow they somehow think the Saskatchewan option would be better.

* (10:30)

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you that we are waiting. We're waiting for them and we're waiting for their federal MPs, but the fact of the matter is that the moment we can sign a power agreement with Ontario and we can sign a power agreement with Saskatchewan then we can afford to build more power plants to export power to other provinces, to give the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) exactly what he's looking for. He wants to promote for trade, he wants to devote—promote development, and here he makes fun—he makes fun of the idea. He's standing back, trying to hold back Manitoba Hydro.

They want to raise the power rates in Manitoba to market rates, and here they are, yesterday, in the Legislature, complaining about a 4 per cent increase. I mean, you can't suck and blow at the same time, even though they try on a constant basis to do it. They want to impose a 4 per cent hydro increase—4 per cent hydro increase—at the same time their former leader wants to take us way up to market rates.

Okay, now, you know, it's just they're—they've got to come up with a consistent plan regarding hydro. They've got some time here; they've got two more years before the election. Unless they want to get whacked again for the fifth time in a row, they should think about what their approach is to hydro development. They should develop—they should be standing up, introducing motions in this House, right here, and supporting calling on the federal government to initiate the east-west power-grid proposal with support from Minister Fletcher, who has some say over where the infrastructure funds are coming from in the next year.

There's a multi-billion dollar infrastructure program the members are aware of. Matter of fact, that's why we have provisions in the budget which they are holding up right now, so that we can match federal funds—match federal funds to develop projects in Manitoba. And one of those, to the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), would be the development of an east-west power grid. So he would just get off his seat and quit constantly complaining and actually be productive and constructive—he should be introducing that kind of a motion.

Rather than introducing Bill 203, he should be introducing a motion to get the folks together, to get his side together and support his Prime Minister, support honourable Fletcher—Mr. Fletcher, and get the rest of those MPs off their seats and propose that we get a real development in this province for an east-west power grid so that we can build more hydro dams, we can supply power, clean power, to Ontario over a—on a long-term basis, and we can also look to the West.

And he should work on getting his Conservative colleagues in Saskatchewan on board, because that would help a lot too. But, once again, he doesn't talk about that. He doesn't talk about the need for having a east-west power grid sending power to Saskatchewan so they don't have to spend the \$15 billion on counterproductive and inefficient methods, so they could be using Manitoba hydro—*[interjection]* Mr. Speaker, he hasn't shut up since I started. I hear this constant buzz to my right, here. Now, it doesn't bother me; I actually enjoy it. But he—*[interjection]* Well, I—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would caution all honourable members to please pick and choose your words very carefully. I'm sure honourable member for Elmwood—I'm asking and encouraging him, in

fact, to please pick and choose his words. I—all members in this Assembly are honourable members, and I would encourage the honourable member to make sure that he chooses his words very carefully during his debate here this morning.

Mr. Maloway: I—you know, I could appreciate that the members are a little prickly this morning, and it's an early—it's early in the morning. I—but I appreciate the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) is back to—paying attention to my speech, and I do appreciate that; I appreciate the member for River East's attention this issue.

But, Mr. Speaker, you know, regarding the member for Emerson's Bill 203, we—it's been explained to him that we, in fact, are dealing with this issue, and we are simply asking him and members of his caucus to simply look around and see—and—how they can contribute to an east-west power grid, which helps in terms of energy distribution in this country, will promote the Manitoba economy, will cause thousands of construction jobs in this province. And the question I'd have to ask is: Where are they in the issue and when are they going to get around to looking at the positive, constructive approach that the Prime Minister took on this issue, that Steven Fletcher takes on this issue? We just want to know, and they do too. Where have these MPs been, and where has the opposition been in Manitoba?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Order

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On a point of order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and I just wanted to seek your advice on whether I might have a point of order.

I know the member for Elmwood did refer to the member for River East being back to listen. I think the record should show very clearly that I was here and hanging on his every word every minute that he was speaking. So I wouldn't want it to be left on the record that, for some reason or other, I wasn't interested and that I was here. So I just ask whether you would rule—see whether it is a point of order or not and just make sure that the record is clear.

Thank you.

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

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order.

I heard the member for Elmwood clearly thank the member for River East for her attention to his words a number of times and I clearly heard him say that he was glad that she was paying attention to what he was saying. And she was here; I can vouch for that. I saw her in very intense conversation with the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) and the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson). And then, when the member for Elmwood asked for her attention she very carefully provided that, so—as we all do when the member for Elmwood asks for our attention.

So I would submit there is no point of order here.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for River East, I did not hear the direct reference of the individual member that she referenced. I'm going to review Hansard of these proceedings here this morning and then I will report back to the House. And I thank the honourable member and I just want to, while I'm on my feet, indicate to all honourable members that our rules are very clear. We're not to make any reference to the presence or absence of any member of the Assembly, but I will bring a ruling back for the House.

* * *

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): It's my privilege to put some words on the record in regards to Bill 10, the partnership of Manitoba in the New West Partnership act, as brought forward by my colleague from Emerson, Mr. Speaker.

I want to indicate that there is—that being a part of the New West Partnership in western Canada with our partners in Saskatchewan—which would have been partners in Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC, would have had many benefits to the province of Manitoba, but this government has chosen, right through their whole term—a number of terms, to renege on that opportunity. I guess you can't renege on something that you were already never in, but this goes back some years.

The New West Partnership, of course, was brought forward by those governments to focus on trade, to focus on international co-operation, to focus

on innovation and procurement, and those are four key areas to a province like Manitoba that is virtually dependent on trade. It goes back to 2006 when this Manitoba government was given the opportunity to join Alberta and BC. They had an investment and labour mobility agreement in 2006, sort of the forerunner of the New West Partnership, but the NDP in Manitoba passed on that opportunity, and then in 2010, never picked up on the opportunity to become part of the New West Partnership Trade Agreement as well.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it's rather ironic that, come this 1st of July, 2013, Saskatchewan will fully implement the agreement on the New West Partnership Trade Agreement, and what happens in Manitoba on the 1st of July this year?

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that on the 1st of July this year, from this government's own bill that they just brought in, our own budget that they forced onto Manitobans last week, that's when the 1 per cent increase in PST in this province takes effect. What a contrast from being able to be involved in a trade agreement. How can they expect—it's not a matter of whether Manitoba would want to be in that free trade agreement with our western partners; it's a matter of would those provinces actually accept the Manitoba NDP.

I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. I mean, we've got a very clear indication here that they're not part of any trade agreement. Well, why not? Well, very clear. No one wants or trusts this Premier (Mr. Selinger) in their trade agreements.

*(10:40)

Why wouldn't they trust him? Well, he's got the worst management experience of any premier in Canada, as proven in many polls. We're still the crime capital of—in many areas, Mr. Speaker, of Canada. Their economic record is not good in regards to the way that they've managed the debt in this province and the deficit. We've got the biggest deficit in the province—or, well, both—we've got the biggest debt in the province's history, and last year we had a billion-dollar deficit; this year we have a—facing a \$518-million deficit.

An Honourable Member: After \$400 million of tax increases.

Mr. Maguire: This government has no management abilities, and, as my colleague from Steinbach has just indicated, this is on top of the fact that they've got \$400 million in new taxes in the last two years

just from the tax increases, never mind the fees and the charges that they've got in other areas.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about transparency. Transparency is very important in trade. It's a—it's the method of trust that's put forward by our trading partners whether it's here in western Canada or around the world. The member from Gimli has just spoken about how we need to be a partner—about how he thinks that the NDP should be a partner with other groups in Canada. Well, the fact is they're a partner with no one, because as Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade Minister he can't find a partnership with anyone. There's no one that wants him. It's a sad irony, but when you talk about trust, how can you do that and want to be a part of a trade agreement in other parts of Canada? Well, get on with it. They've had three years since the New West Partnership was brought into being, and they haven't got a partnership with anybody yet. And it's actually seven years since Alberta and BC got together on these areas, trying to make it easier for people to move between provinces so that they can take their training with them and work in other areas.

So, Mr. Speaker, I guess I want to say that the member—that member also mentioned the opportunities in the—of the foreign trade zone. I'm really glad that he mentioned that, because it reminded me that it was my private member's bill that we brought forward in this Legislature that moved the foreign trade zone into being that this House unanimously accepted the opportunity to have a foreign trade zone in CentrePort. It's the first one of its kind in Manitoba. And I was very proud to be able to bring that bill forward here and thankful for the acceptance and acknowledgement of this House to bring it forward, because foreign trade zones are an opportunity to do those very things, enhance trade, enhance international co-operation, enhance innovation and enhance procurement, and have the opportunity for investors to come to Manitoba and put their faith in this province. I would say that there'd be an awful lot more of them if we weren't looking at the kind of debt, deficit and increased PST and the differences that we're driving—the wedges that we're driving between our province and other areas of Canada by this government's actions.

I alluded to the fact that there are many, many barriers. Partnerships remove barriers. They remove those barriers in trade investment and labour mobility. But, unlike this government, we are seeing the other governments—pardon me, Mr. Speaker—in other areas, who are getting together to reduce the

areas of red tape and increased taxes. We've got a government here who feels that it's more important for them to pad from their—to pad their own pockets as opposed to helping out taxpayers in Manitoba. Increased hydro rates just keep going up here in Manitoba, increased PST, increased taxes on a number of other areas. You know, they didn't have enough tax when they first came in, so they've broadened it out onto labour to bill—labour for construction in Manitoba, which never was a tax before, that was as much as the old PST on building supplies for the buildings—doubled the tax, essentially, on construction in Manitoba. Not a very detrimental—or not a very enhancing thing for other provinces to look at. Then they—that wasn't enough; they had to take out the P—broaden the PST onto other areas of professionalism like lawyers, accountants, architects. So they taxed that because you need all of those for construction before you can build anything in Manitoba. That, again, enhanced the government's coffers. Then they brought it out on life insurance and home insurance and haircuts last year—many, many areas.

And then, to add insult to injury, instead of, you know, doing what some may have called an enhanced HST that we have in Manitoba now, they broadened it all out and then raised it 1 per cent to 8 per cent. That's not a way to become a trade partner.

Mr. Speaker, even our own neighbours to the west know that if you increase the basic personal exemption you get a greater opportunity for people to participate in your economy, to put back from their households, to improve their households, to improve their families, to improve the educational opportunities for their youth, the sports opportunities, recreational opportunities for them. This government is now faced with the fact that basic personal exemptions are a 171 per cent higher in the province of Saskatchewan: \$15,241 versus \$8,884 here in Manitoba. We're falling further behind under this government all the time. That's why other provinces don't want to have anything to do with Manitoba in a trade agreement, and that's, I think, a very detrimental situation.

I come from a constituency that's a neighbour to the Saskatchewan border, which means we're closer to Alberta, too, I guess, Mr. Speaker. But we've got a lot of labour mobility in regards to people coming and working in the oil industry in southwest Manitoba right now, but they live in Saskatchewan. The road from—along from the Saskatchewan border

through Pierson to get to the oilfield in Waskada. They come out of Saskatchewan and Moosomin to work in the oilfields north of Elkhorn now. But those people are travelling back and forth every day, but their homes are in Saskatchewan because they pay less tax, they get a bigger personal exemption and they have 60 per cent lower PST.

Those are the reasons, Mr. Speaker, that I would leave on the table today as to why this government's falling behind and why we are not partners, and I encourage the House to vote in favour of my colleague's bill to enhance opportunities in the New West Partnership and have Manitoba move forward into that partnership with our neighbours.

Thank you.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I'm excited to speak to Bill 203 today, The Participation of Manitoba in the New West Partnership Act. I wish our colleagues from across the road would show the same enthusiasm.

I urge the government to contact the governments of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan to begin negotiations to join the economic partnership known as the New West Partnership. This partnership focuses on trade, international co-operation, innovation and procurement.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's economic success is linked to trade. We cannot afford to ignore opportunities for increased trade. The New West Partnership Trade Agreement removes the barriers to trade, investment and labour mobility across three provinces. The New West Partnership encompasses an economic region of 9 million people and has a combined GDP of more than \$550 billion. It's the largest agreement on trade and labour liberalization that Canada has ever seen.

The key elements of the New West Partnership Trade Agreement are non-discrimination: workers and businesses from three provinces will be treated equally; transparency: provinces will notify each other to ensure that new measures including standards and regulations are not unnecessarily different or result in new impediments to trade, investment or labour mobility; streamlined regulations: unnecessary differences in provinces' businesses and occupations related to regulations and standards will be eliminated; legitimate objectives: provinces continue to have the flexibility to protect important public interests such as public security and

safety, human, animal or plant life, health, the environment, and the health and safety of workers and the provision of social services and health services; procurement: public procurements will be conducted openly and transparently ensuring equal opportunity for suppliers in all provinces.

* (10:50)

Mr. Speaker, under the New West Partnership's agreement—international co-operation agreement—the provinces will collaborate on joint international initiatives, including undertaking joint missions, marketing visits, sharing resources in international markets and sharing market intelligence.

Mr. Speaker, the first major outcome of the New West Partnership was a joint mission to China and Japan in May of 2010. Since that trip, the western provinces already see more trade with China—certainly more than the rest of Canada.

Under the New West Partnership innovation agreement, the provinces will work together to co-ordinate provincial activities in research and development. Under the New West Partnership procurement agreement, the provinces will work together to jointly purchase goods and services in order to achieve efficiencies and cost savings. I believe that Manitoba's participation in trade agreements such as the New West Partnership are integral to the advancement of our economy.

Mr. Speaker, we have CentrePort. CentrePort Canada is North America's newest inland port with 20,000 acres of industrial zoned land and a foreign trade zone unique to Canada. Trade accounts for 15 per cent of employment in Manitoba, and transportation and warehousing account for 6 per cent of further employment in this province. CentrePort and trade would grow under the New West Partnership—would grow under the New West Partnership. Failing to participate in what would be essentially a single market that will make our western neighbours highly competitive will hurt Manitoba. The New West Partnership is aimed specifically at the expansion of economic ties to Asia, which is a market Manitoba would profit from enormously. This would also decrease our vulnerability to downturns in the US economy.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP feel that the New West Partnership would not open any doors that aren't already open. The NDP feel that the New West Partnership's dispute resolution mechanism is not one that they could—consistent with theirs. This is

one of their main reasons for not joining the partnership. How different could the New West Partnership's dispute resolution mechanism be from that of the NDP's? Would the NDP not join a pan-Canadian partnership if that dispute resolution mechanism was different from theirs?

The NDP feel that their focus is on a larger pan-Canadian agreement. Joining the New West Partnership would be a good start to forming a larger pan-Canadian partnership.

Mr. Speaker, during—the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson) has stated Manitoba continues to work with other jurisdictions to reduce interprovincial trade—no, interprovincial trade barriers to trade mobility, and goes on to say that we'll continue to work on interprovincial trade barriers this coming year. And my department continues to work with other governments in the US and international jurisdictions to foster strong, positive relations to advocate in support of Manitoba's interests in the global arena. Working together kind of sounds like the New West Partnership.

There has been talk about an east-west power grid, and how Saskatchewan needs our power and how important it is to work together to achieve this, Mr. Speaker. The working together are very important words in this world. We do it every day. We all know the strength in numbers. Working alone is not the answer. We have Churchill; we have excess hydro power. In Manitoba, we are a have province with a have-not government. We need partners. What would be wrong with entering into a partnership with Canada's top economic performers?

Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity to position Manitoba as an economic player in Canada. We have the opportunity to sit—Manitoba an exclusive trade deal with our wealthy economic neighbours to the west and begin to grow our economy by taking advantage of the opportunity those economics can provide. This agreement would make Manitoba a much more attractive place to invest. I am at a loss to understand why the NDP are turning down a golden opportunity to grow Manitoba's economy in such a straightforward way.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP complain about a lack of transfer payments, but when they have a chance to help Manitoba's economy, they say no. There's no future revenue. They say no to future trade. They say no to easier investment in the province. They say no

to Manitoba's future businesspeople and leaders. They are saying no to Manitoba's future.

Mr. Speaker, trade is a—is very important to Manitoba's economy. Trade between provinces should not be a restrictive thing but a positive one, fostering growth in many different selectors of the economy of each of these provinces. The NDP should do the right thing and negotiate Manitoba's membership in the New West Partnership. It is time for the government to rectify its past mistakes and pass this bill and sign on to the New West Partnership. Or are they just too arrogant to realize the—how important partners are?

Mr. Speaker, I urge the members of this House to support this bill. Thank you.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Yes, Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak against Bill 203. A lot of things are repetitious, but we're already pursuing opportunities with our provincial partners through the agreement on international trade.

Manitoba was and continues to be a leading driver of labour mobility. We're already in discussions about participation in the New West Partnership. The bill doesn't offer anything of substance. We are offering substance. We're working at delivering on trade, and we're working to move business forward in Manitoba.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about my own personal workings with Saskatchewan. Being right on the border, I'm one of the only communities, I guess, in Manitoba and Saskatchewan that's right on the border. I have actually 400 residents in Flin Flon that live in Saskatchewan, and so we have to rely on a close relationship, and we have, whether it's in health care—and I have to say that most of the people that live in Saskatchewan want to use the Manitoba health care because it's a lot more efficient. The mining in Flin Flon is in both sides of the border in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and so when an injured miner gets hurt, he would sooner go to the Manitoba side and apply for medical assistant than to go to the Saskatchewan side.

I also, as a teacher, over the many years, have worked with Saskatchewan, Alberta in the western protocol, and we've worked closely with that. So there's many opportunities that you can see, and the opposition has pointed out—and I notice they're using the word we, you know, or our—our hydro—you know, and, you know, we're the ones that brought

hydro in; our CentrePort, and it's we that brought in CentrePort. So I like the way they're changing their tone.

In the North, we're also working on agreements with Nunavut. The First Nations—the Dene First Nation is looking at a transfer of land with Nunavut and land in Manitoba, which would be a precedent. So Manitoba's working with all its neighbours, north, south, east and west, and I—it's a proud moment for me to stand here and talk about those opportunities that we have led forward.

The one thing that I would like to say is that in 2011, it was the first joint Cabinet that they had meeting between Manitoba and Saskatchewan in Yorkton, and I really want to push forward Flin Flon to be the next joint Cabinet meeting, because we're right on the border and have a lot of similarities with Saskatchewan.

I've met, in mining—mining we have a lot of similarities because, like I say, the rock doesn't just stay on one side of the border, so the minerals are all over the northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba. So I've met with the reeve. I've met with Cameco and HudBay on different ways that we can work together with First Nations in promoting the opportunities in the north.

* (11:00)

So, like I say, this bill doesn't go far enough—

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

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Flin Flon will have six minutes remaining.

The hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private members' resolution, and the resolution to be considered before us this morning is the one brought forward by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), titled Rural CancerCare Hubs—

House Business

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

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

Pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday, will be one put forward by the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell). The title

of the resolution is 100th Anniversary of the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba's Dome Building.

Mr. Speaker: Prior to proceeding with the resolution by the honourable member for Selkirk, it has been announced that, pursuant to rule 31(8), that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one brought forward by the honourable member for Brandon East, and the title of the resolution is 100th Anniversary of the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba's Dome Building.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on House business?

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I'm seeking leave of the House that when we convene into Estimates, to allow the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister), and critics who are dealing with their Estimates here in the Chamber, to have staff attend with them in the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House during the Estimates process to allow the Leader of the Official Opposition to have staff present in the Chamber?

An Honourable Member: And critics.

Mr. Speaker: And critics, pardon me. *[Agreed]*

RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Speaker: Now we'll proceed with the resolution.

Res. 3—Rural CancerCare Hubs

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Brandon East,

WHEREAS when faced with a potential cancer diagnosis, families want the fastest possible access to testing and treatment; and

WHEREAS wait times for radiation therapy grew to be dangerously long at six weeks in 1999, with up to an 18-week wait for prostate cancers; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has worked hard with CancerCare Manitoba and other partners to dramatically reduce the wait times for radiation therapy to an average of one week or less, the lowest in Canada, and over the same period, Manitoba has seen dramatic improvements in cancer survival rates; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has introduced the most comprehensive plan in Canada to reduce wait times from the moment a patient's

doctor first suspects cancer to when treatment begins, including the testing, referrals, diagnosis and treatment planning in between; and

WHEREAS this plan includes upgrading 16 rural chemotherapy sites into CancerCare hubs, like the one in Morden-Winkler, with Brandon, Selkirk, Steinbach and Thompson to follow over the next year; and

WHEREAS the new rural cancer hubs will complement other elements of the provincial government's cancer-fighting plans, which includes cancer prevention strategies, covering the costs of cancer treatments and drugs, more advanced testing, after-hours care and other supports for cancer patients, thereby helping to both prevent cancer and catch it earlier.

THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly commend those health-care professionals who deliver cancer services across the province to ensure that Manitobans affected by cancer have the best possible chance of being—of beating the disease; and

THEREFORE IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the Manitoba Legislature urge the provincial government to continue investing in strategies that support cancer patients and their families, including the provincial government's commitment to ensure—ensuring Manitoba families have the fastest access in the country to world-class cancer treatment, diagnostic and treatments.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to consider the resolution as printed in today's proceedings? [Agreed]

WHEREAS when faced with a potential cancer diagnosis, families want the fastest possible access to testing and treatment; and

WHEREAS wait times for radiation therapy grew to be dangerously long at six weeks in 1999, with up to an 18 week wait for prostate cancers; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has worked hard with CancerCare Manitoba and other partners to dramatically reduce the wait time for radiation therapy to an average of one week or less, the lowest in Canada, and over the same period Manitoba has also seen dramatic improvements in cancer survival rates; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has introduced the most comprehensive plan in Canada to reduce wait times from the moment a patient's

doctor first suspects cancer to when treatment begins, including the testing, referrals, diagnosis and treatment planning in between; and

WHEREAS this plan includes upgrading the 16 rural chemotherapy sites into CancerCare Hubs, like the one in Morden-Winkler, with Brandon, Selkirk, Steinbach and Thompson to follow over the next year; and

WHEREAS the new rural CancerCare Hubs will complement other elements of the Provincial Government's cancer fighting plan, which includes cancer prevention strategies, covering the costs of cancer treatment and drugs, more advanced testing, after hours care and other supports for cancer patients thereby helping to both prevent cancer and catch it earlier.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly commend those health care professionals who deliver cancer services across the province to ensure that Manitobans affected by cancer have the best possible chance of beating the disease; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the Provincial Government to continue investing in strategies that support cancer patients and their families, including the Provincial Government's commitment to ensuring Manitoba families have the fastest access in the country to world class cancer testing, diagnostics and treatment.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Selkirk, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon East that:

WHEREAS—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Speaker, it's a great honour to speak today. I want to thank my colleagues for giving me the opportunity to speak to this important resolution. It really—it just highlights our government's commitment to provide first-class treatment to cancer victims, and cancer individuals who have cancer, in the rural area.

We know that all Manitobans have been affected by cancer. We know that it's a challenging illness. We also know that we are winning that fight. We know that there are success stories every day.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to building the first system—the best system in the country to deliver the fastest cancer testing,

diagnostic and treatment. It's really part of a broader strategy that our government has to providing health care to rural Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution, as well, recognizes the women and men who work every day in our system whose task it is, is to fight cancer and to find the cure for cancer, and individuals who've devoted their lives to this task. So I think it's important for us as members today to support this resolution, to pass this resolution so we can forward it on to individuals, whether they are in CancerCare Manitoba or who work in the various hospitals around the province who provide care to individuals with cancer. I think it's—it would send the proper message to them if we, as a Legislature, today, pass this resolution.

The plan, Mr. Speaker, is to make all these 16 rural chemotherapy sites in Manitoba full CancerCare hubs. We have one that the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen)—in the Boundary Trails hospital. We've—there's one there now, and I know that he'll probably be speaking next and I know he would probably like to thank the staff there, and one way he could do that, of course, is by passing this important resolution before us. This is, of course—is part of a much broader strategy, a \$40-million strategy that we have to really transform the cancer patient's journey.

This year and in the next couple years, we'll be opening up four new CancerCare hubs: one in Brandon, one in Selkirk—that's why I'm honoured today to be able to speak to this—one in Steinbach and one in Thompson. These hubs will be expanded beyond those four to *[inaudible]* 16 rural sites, and I want to include those names: we have, of course, Dauphin, in future years; Deloraine; Flin Flon; Gimli; Hamiota; Neepawa—I know the member for—I'm sure, the member for Agassiz (Mr. Briese) will be eager to speak and to support this resolution. The member for Pinawa—the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko)—the community of Pinawa will be getting one shortly, and I know he'll be eager to stand up and to support this resolution to show the individuals in Pinawa that he's truly representing them. This is an opportunity for the member to stand up and say, you know, I truly do represent you because I'm going to support this important initiative of this government. So, we're eager to hear him, Mr. Speaker. I believe he's probably next on the list.

Of course, Portage la Prairie, Mr. Speaker—we know that the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) has been a very eager—a very active

member out in the community, we hear, recently, and we're glad to see that. We know that he's going to be eager to speak to this as well.

Russell—we've—we know that, I believe the member could be—Riding Mountain, I believe, where Russell is now. I know that she's raised some health-care issues here in the Chamber. Here's a chance for her to speak to this, to support this resolution. I know my good friend from Steinbach, he's always eager to talk about all the great things that are happening in Steinbach. I know that he'll be eager to talk about this CancerCare hub in a few moments, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker.

My colleague from Swan River as well, and, of course, the—my colleague from The Pas, and, of course, Thompson, Mr. Speaker. All these communities will be getting these new CancerCare hubs. They'll be staffed by new CancerCare advocates who will take care of scheduling appointments, and also their—the task is to co-ordinate faster care for rural patients.

The hubs, of course, will—the purpose of the hub is to allow rural Manitobans to get quality care closer to home. They'll co-ordinate various aspects of treatment for rural patients when it comes to testing, referrals, diagnostic—diagnosis and treatment, Mr. Speaker. They'll complement other aspects of our government's strategy, covering the cost of cancer drugs which provides—excuse me—also going to provide faster cancer screening and testing. And we want to help those Manitobans who want to quit smoking. And I quit smoking a couple of years ago, so I'm very proud of that, as is my wife.

As I said, I want to talk a little about the home cancer care program, which was established by our government to make life easier for cancer patients, and it is succeeding. It covers all oral cancer drugs as well as support drugs that deal with side effects of those treatments, at no cost to the patient. I remember the members opposite, they had a chance to endorse this in the last election, and they did not, Mr. Speaker, which is regrettable. But they have a chance today to explain why they're opposed to having rural cancer care drugs covered at no cost—excuse me.

* (11:10)

In less than a year, over 7,300 patients have already signed up, and they've already saved close to \$5.3 million through this best-in-Canada coverage,

Mr. Speaker. It's another one of the great initiatives of our government.

Mr. Speaker, we know that we've reduced waiting times for individuals who have—who require radiation therapy, to one week or less. We are dedicated to make cancer wait times the shortest in the country—excuse me—*[interjection]* Choked up over this.

Mr. Speaker, we've added 50 more health-care professionals to further accelerate cancer testing, diagnostic and treatment for every Manitoban. We're providing faster cancer screening and testing by hiring eight more pathologists, and we're also hiring a cancer-testing co-ordinator and expanding the Breast Health Centre.

As I said, we're—this is a chance for members opposite to support our government's initiative to provide better care for rural Manitobans, Mr. Speaker. But, more importantly, it's a chance for all of us to thank the men and women who work every day in this field. I urge all members to support this resolution.

Thank you.

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today and to put a few words on the record with respect to cancer and cancer care in Manitoba, and on behalf of the many, many people in Manitoba who find themselves in the place where they are dealing with cancer, whether it be that they have a suspicion that something might be going on, whether they've been to their general practitioner, their family doctor, and they're just starting on that journey, down that road of uncertainty and anxiety.

Whether they have been to the GP and now they're in the process somewhere, maybe they're waiting for testing because their family doctor has also indicated that he has a concern or she has a concern, and they've now brought it forward. Or whether they have received that testing, and now they might be waiting for a specialist, or whether they're past the specialist and now waiting for treatment in the system itself.

Mr. Speaker, the people in Manitoba who are on this journey are in a difficult place. People who are dealing with cancer are in a difficult place. Whether they are—regardless of what point in that journey they are at, and we need to keep in mind that front-line workers in the health-care system in Manitoba work very, very hard to provide the best care they can. We

have professionals across the spectrum in every corner of this province who work very hard to provide care that is appropriate and that is delivered with compassion to people who find themselves struggling with cancer.

We need to acknowledge at the outset, though, that despite their best efforts, health care is a gigantic system. Actually, it's not even a system; according to Don Drummond, who submitted the commission on the reform for Ontario's public services, it is a disjointed services in many silos, and that creates challenges for health-care professionals because we have people who do a very good job in the place that they are, but it always becomes the challenge to co-ordinate their efforts to provide for the best possible care for the patient themselves. So it is difficult to make sure that that process is always moving forward with efficiency and with speed to get a patient from suspicion all the way to the end to treatment and recovery.

And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, and we all know in this House, because we all know people who have been touched by cancer, and many of us have been touched by cancer, and we know what it means to be in that place. And we know that there's no worse circumstance to be in than to be exactly in that process, feeling helpless, suffering perhaps physical symptoms, feeling anxious, having fear, and having worry and having stress.

And it's appropriate that we're talking about this subject today because April is Daffodil Month, and I'm wearing my daffodil here and I see that the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) is also wearing his daffodil, and many of us in this Chamber have worn this small flower just as a reminder about the important work that's being undertaken by the Canadian Cancer Society. And it—it's just a symbol of hope and represents the fight against all cancers, and we know that April 27th is just passed, and that is the day on which we particularly mark the importance of wearing the daffodil. But I'm proud to wear mine today as we talk about this issue.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to talk about the group of doctors, the general practitioners, who had a focus in oncology, working out of the Boundary Trails Health Centre in Morden-Winkler, who actually commenced this work that we are discussing today. And it gives me great pride to talk about the leadership of that team of family practitioners, family physicians working in oncology, FPOs, who actually first identified the challenges

that individuals were facing going through the system. It was those doctors who first discussed in Manitoba how to improve the way in which all these health-care components—nurses, doctors, radiologists, specialists—worked together, how they traded information, how they developed a set of best practices, how they took advantage of expertise of those doctors who had been in the system longer in order to help patients, in order to educate patients about their condition and what they should expect and what they can do to help themselves in order to focus attention on improving patient care, navigating the system and cutting down on wait time.

And, Mr. Speaker, it was Dr. Cornie Woelk and Dr. Bob Menzies—those names will be known to many of my colleagues in this Chamber—who first asked, what can we do to help the journey go faster for patients? And what an incredible undertaking it must have been for them in the early 2000s, just after the opening of Boundary Trails Health Centre, to ask these questions and know that there was no natural apparatus existing in the province. They were pioneers in many respects, saying, we've got this good idea; we'd like to go forward; what would that look like?

And it was in the context of their community cancer program that these questions were first asked and that solutions were first pondered. And so they started taking referrals from other doctors in the area, in the region. And they were helping them. For example, let's say a doctor in Swan Lake had a patient concerned about a breast lump, but that doctor may only see one or two patients a year who presented in that way. So it's hard to stay current. In this case, this doctor could contact a doctor working at Boundary Trails Health Centre and ask for guidance, ask for the best way to proceed, ask what they could do to help the patient go through the system faster. And, indeed, there are practical things that a layperson like myself wouldn't have necessarily known, but things that actually make a difference. Where a doctor might sincerely order a test and on the basis of the evidence of that test when it's received, order a second test, a doctor with more experience might come in and say, no, no, no. We will not do consecutive testing; we will do concurrent testing so that when we're able to actually arrange for an appointment with the oncologist we'll get them in faster and treatment can happen faster.

It was actually a—it was—the idea of patient navigation did—does not belong to this government. It was first proposed in the east coast of the US by a

doctor who was looking at improving patient care for people who were economically disenfranchised. But the—but it was soon discovered that in Manitoba this same concept could apply, especially to areas that experienced rural challenges to receiving health care. And we know, and my colleagues will stand today and talk today about some of the challenges of delivering health care in rural areas, and we have examples from all over the province. We need to focus. We need to drill down on what it means to make real health care happen in communities, regardless of where they live.

I wanted to mention to you, Mr. Speaker, that for their work, those colleagues in Boundary Trails hospital won a health innovation award in 2009. Dr. Dhaliwal looked at the model at BTHC. He took notice. He was excited about it. He led it forward, this idea of centralized co-ordination of structures resulting in enhanced services.

And, you know, CancerCare hub may actually be an unhelpful term because it implies somehow that there's a campus approach, that everything's located in one area, and that's not the case at all. It's actually more of a virtual approach, providing expertise and providing services to patients, but doing so in a virtual setting, connecting people together in that way.

A lot of this new work relies on nurses who have oncology training. They're the ones contacting family doctors, relaying information to the family physicians in oncology for review and guidance. And that's important work and we're glad that that is taking place.

But let's keep in mind there are distinct challenges in place, and I just mentioned one of them now, when it comes to delivering health care in a rural settings. But there are disincentives to move forward because this involves change. And much in our system has failed to improve because change has been so difficult to produce in our health-care system. So it needs buy-in, but it needs leadership from this minister. It needs leadership from this government. It means that if this system actually has merit, that beyond what the government's telling us they're going to invest in, they must invest in doctors and release them from their clinical work. They must make an investment here to put their money where their mouth is, to underscore the great importance of this to communities and to patients and to carry on with the work.

* (11:20)

There are other challenges, of course, like people who don't go through a family physician—they go straight to ER to get a diagnosis, and that will make it more difficult.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to mention my family was one of those families who dealt with cancer in a very real way. My mother was first diagnosed with cancer when I was in grade 7, and she would have been 39 years old. I remember the first day we dropped her off at Lennox Bell Lodge in Winnipeg for outpatients who were there. Many rural people go to that place, and I noticed it's still in operation today. I can recall the stress and the hardship and the difficulty to leave Mom there and to return home. My mom fought bravely three times. She lost her battle to cancer three–five years ago, but we are—we will always be grateful to the individuals—to the doctors and the nurses—for the care they provided. And I feel very, very strongly about the need to continue to put every effort towards improving cancer care in Manitoba.

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): It's a privilege to rise today in the Legislature to speak to this private members' resolution, Mr. Speaker. I hope that the members opposite support this resolution as it does call on the provincial government to continue investing in strategies that can support cancer patients and their families. Very, very important for the provincial government to be involved and engaged in investing in health care.

I would note the member who just finished speaking his remarks in his own personal experience, Mr. Speaker, all of us in this House, and, in fact, all of us in this province, have personal experience with cancer whether in our immediate families or amongst our friends. It is a disease that affects virtually everyone in their lifetime, and it is an important area of health care that requires a continued and ongoing investment, continued and ongoing diligence from provincial governments whoever may occupy the office of government from time to time in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, in Brandon, we were very fortunate to have a cancer treatment centre opened this past year. Three years ago, I was at the sod turning with the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), the member from St. Vital—for Seine River, and then last year at the grand opening with the Premier (Mr. Selinger) to cut the ribbon to open that cancer treatment centre. It's a very, very, very important facility in western Manitoba to serve people throughout that region of

the province. There's approximately 200,000 people that that cancer treatment centre serves. It's the first such centre operational outside the city of Winnipeg in the history of the province—an investment that was provided for in successive budgets in the past.

Our government, as you know, believes strongly in investing in health-care excellence in this province. We also believe in investing in educational excellence, Mr. Speaker. This budget that we're just finished debating on Friday will invest in infrastructure at historic high levels to help us address concerns with increased flooding in the province as well as road and bridge infrastructure. So we are a government that believes in investing in the province and investing in our communities throughout the province. In this particular resolution, we are addressing health-care services in delivering cancer services across the province so—to ensure that Manitobans affected by cancer have the best possible chance of beating the disease and have the best possible care as close as possible to them wherever they may live throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, we are, as a Province, making all 16 rural chemotherapy sites full CancerCare hubs in the province like the existing one in Boundary Trails in Morden-Winkler where the member represents—the member that just spoke represents. This is part of a \$40-million comprehensive, aggressive and first-in-Canada strategy to transform the cancer patient journey in the province of Manitoba. Four CancerCare hubs—one has already been opened in Brandon, but three more will open across the province during the next year in Selkirk, Steinbach and Thompson, which will cover off a great many people in the province of Manitoba, but we are more ambitious than that.

We as a Province recognize that we represent north, south, east and west, rural and urban in the province. So there will be hubs expanded into Dauphin, into Deloraine, into Flin Flon, into Gimli, into Hamiota–Morden-Winkler, as I already mentioned—Neepawa, Pinawa, Portage la Prairie, Russell–Selkirk and Steinbach, as I've already mentioned—Swan River, The Pas and Thompson, as I've mentioned. These hubs will be staffed with new cancer patient advocates who will take care of scheduling appointments and co-ordinating faster care for rural patients, guiding rural patients—who are already in a very stressful and very trying time in their lives—through the maze of protocols that need to be satisfied to get the care that they need. Those advocates are a very, very important part of

providing the best possible care possible for Manitobans, and I'm very, very proud that we do not shirk from investing in cancer treatment, but more importantly that—broadly more important—we don't shirk from investing in the betterment of the province of Manitoba as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, the new CancerCare hubs will help more rural Manitobans get quality care closer to home. As I mentioned, they will co-ordinate various aspects of treatment for rural patients, including testing, referrals, diagnosis and treatment. They will also complement other elements of the government's existing strategy for cancer patients including covering the costs of support drugs, providing faster cancer screening and testing, and enhancing supports to Manitobans who want to quit smoking. It's a very comprehensive plan, one that requires this investment and, as I said in my opening remarks, I hope members opposite will support this resolution as it does call on this government to continue its work to provide cancer treatment services for people throughout the province of Manitoba.

And, you know, as a MLA that is not from the city of Winnipeg—there are a few of us in this caucus that are not from the city of Winnipeg—but the majority of MLAs who serve the rural part of this province are Conservative MLAs and this is an initiative that directly supports and helps their constituents where they live throughout rural Manitoba. So again, I would urge members opposite to support this resolution calling on our government to continue to invest in cancer-care support in the province of Manitoba and to, in fact, to do more to support rural Manitobans and, in fact, Manitobans wherever they live across the province in fighting this dreadful and deadly disease.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch just quickly on Budget 2013 which does include investments that will make quality care even more accessible to Manitobans. We already have the shortest wait times and third lowest rate of cancers in Canada. We want to be the best in Canada. That's our ambition: to be the best in Canada in treating and addressing this disease. This initiative encourages to continue with that vision and to continue with that work to aggressively combat cancer in the province of Manitoba.

I also want to note, Mr. Speaker, it's a statistic I did not know, but Manitoba has the best lung cancer survival rate after one year and five years in Canada. I think that's a very noteworthy accomplishment for a

government that is seeking to address and more aggressively address cancer in the province.

Mr. Speaker, we have a continuing effort to direct—to provide direct funding to shorten the time—waiting time from the suspicion of a cancer diagnosis—suspicion of cancer to a diagnosis and to treatment in less than 60 days, and in that work we are building the best system in the country to deliver the fastest screening, diagnosis and treatment for cancer. Our plan will streamline services, improve efficiencies in the system and reduce wait times for treatment to improve care for patients. And again, this particular resolution specifically points to streamlining of services, improving efficiencies in the system and reducing wait times for treatment for rural Manitobans. And again, I would encourage members to support this initiative to push us to do more for their constituents throughout rural Manitoba.

We are ensuring that the strategy is patient-centred, including a patient participation advisory group comprised of cancer survivors to help inform further development in implementation of the strategy. We want to seek the advice and guidance of those who have gone through the system in the past. They know the shortfalls in the system and they can offer the best advice as to how make the system better. That is a very, very important philosophical imperative that we have. We want to take the best advice that we have from people who have used the system to make our cancer treatment better for all Manitobans throughout the province.

* (11:30)

Mr. Speaker, I could go on about a number of other things such as covering the cost of cancer drugs, which I've mentioned earlier, and enhancing support for rural patients, which I've mentioned earlier. But I will close my remarks by saying that I appreciate the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for bringing in this resolution, it's always heartening to have members in this House, particularly government members from this House, challenge the government to do better. I know that members opposite want us to do better, so I would encourage them to support this resolution, support their constituents and encourage Manitoba to be the best it can be in terms of cancer treatment in Canada. Thank you.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Yes, we on this side of the House do remain hopeful that the government will do better, and sometimes we're

disappointed in that hope, but, you know, we'll continue on hoping that Manitoba can continue to be a better place to be, but it's a little dangerous under this government.

Many of us have had close family members that have been stricken with cancer, Mr. Speaker, and some of us have dealt with it on a very personal level, others with friends. And it is a devastating illness that we are doing great things with in—worldwide in how to deal with it and how to treat patients, and care, we hope, is improving.

We see—did see, indeed, in Brandon, a regional hub that was initiated there by the Brandon Regional Health Centre Foundation—started fundraising for this centre some five, six, seven years ago. They started their lotteries, they started private fundraising and they were well on the way to funding this cancer treatment centre when the government suddenly discovered that, hmm, maybe we should be embarrassed into doing this, and, indeed, the government came in and funded that treatment centre.

So—and then, of course, it was very good of the foundation to change that perspective and now they've moved on to creating a hospice for people that are in treatment, and that families are coming to that treatment centre, Mr. Speaker. It's, you know, the—very important that—not just for rural Manitoba, but the city of Brandon, that that treatment centre is there and that, indeed, Murray House has now been established in order to that—make it easier for those families to come and spend time with their loved ones and be their advocates when they're in that treatment centre.

You know, we have seen many people in Brandon and in western Manitoba have to travel for treatment. Of course, in western Manitoba they still have to travel to Brandon or to other centres, and in Brandon, occasionally, we still have to travel to Winnipeg or, indeed, to other centres. And that travel that has been done, it was going on for years and years, Mr. Speaker, and the volunteers that took those people into Winnipeg day after day for that treatment, waited for them there, travelled with them home, cared for them—those volunteers are some of the most significant that we've had to deal with in the Westman area.

It is a very difficult thing to see someone that you've become a friend with going through that treatment, and to be part of that, their recovery, hopefully, is something that is very important to

many, many Manitobans. And all those volunteers that drove those vehicles, drove those vans, drove those patients in time and again to Winnipeg and elsewhere for treatment, and now we see that again in rural Manitoba where they are coming in to Brandon and other treatment centres. And we're very fortunate, as I said, to have the start for—of a—Murray House, there, will help their treatment.

So these centres are, of course, very important to Manitobans, and—but the most important thing, really—you know, you can have all the facilities you want, but it's the staff; it's the doctors; it's the nurses. People treat people, and they are the very important part of this whole system, and how they deal with the patients that are coming in. This is all—often a very troubling time for those individuals and their families, a lot of unknowns and a lot of questions. And even knowing what are the right questions to ask about the treatment is also—always a very concerning thing. So the doctors, the nurses, the staff—they do a great job of that, and that is where the investment needs to be, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we did—I heard about cancer care drugs and funding for them and, indeed, we all have lots of stories. I do have a good friend, or had a good friend, that unfortunately is no longer with us, went through cancer treatment and the prognosis looked very good. He was one of these people that would do anything for you, was a pillar of the community, very successful in business, very successful with his family, and was travelling a great deal when he was diagnosed. And the doctor at that time said, well, you know, we can't really look at doing this particular type of care so we might have to look at oral cancer drugs. And this individual, as you do in business, sometimes you plan for the future so this individual had paid out some dividends into the business out of the business, paid some tax on that, lent the money back into the business to continue to have his business thriving. This was prior to him being diagnosed, so that when they went into the oral cancer drugs, his Pharmacare deductible was \$45,000. You can't go back and redo things that you did in business planning for your future, so, well, he had to pay that deductible.

And those things, you know, unfortunately that individual, although he was very strong and went through quite a battle, he's no longer with us, Mr. Speaker, and I truly do miss that friend. He was one of those friends that you might not talk to for a month or two or several months, and he could pick up the phone and pick up right where you'd left off,

and again be the best of friends. So, unfortunately, he lost that battle but his family carries on and his name is recognized and carried forward.

I do also have—you know, cancer can be a very sad illness and prior to the election, there were several people that came and spoke to me about their and their family's experience with cancer treatment in Manitoba. Some very, very sad stories as I'm sure you'd realize, Mr. Speaker, and one in particular was from a father whose daughter was in her 30s, was diagnosed with cancer and breast cancer and went through the treatments, and it was discovered that it was a very aggressive form of this particular cancer. But there was a new drug out on the market that was available in many, many other provinces and had not been certified for use yet in Manitoba. So this father, as any father would do for their daughter, tried to advance her own well-being and tried to see if that drug could be made available in Manitoba. That was turned down by the government. So then he offered to pay for that drug for his daughter. And he went around and around with that type of a battle and again was turned down. He could not buy that drug for his daughter for treatment in Manitoba at that time, and his daughter subsequently passed away.

Would that have helped her treatment? We don't know that now. We'll never know. There were other patients at that time as we now discover that were granted access to that drug. And, certainly, that drug is now available in Manitoba.

But a very sad story to listen to from a father that would do anything for his daughter, who is no longer with us, all because of, you know, well, bureaucracy is one of those nasty words that you run into that wall, you'll do anything you can, you offer to pay out of your own pocket; no, no, we will not allow that is what this government says. So very, very sad, Mr. Speaker, to see those types of things still happening in Manitoba, and this government taking lots of credit for things.

But, again, wait times are a critical thing. They take credit for all kinds of reductions in wait times but as recent as two weeks ago, I had a good friend that had to choose to go to the United States for their cancer treatment because the wait times were just too long in Manitoba. And this is an individual—this isn't their first time through the system. This is a secondary cancer. He went through cancer treatment successfully a couple of years ago. So they know the system, they know the process, and they are certainly not new to it. And when it came right down to it,

they could not wait for treatment in Manitoba and chose to travel to the United States, to Rochester, to the Mayo Clinic there; had successful surgery there and, of course, all that is—goes with a lot of disconnection with family, a lot of angst when you're travelling, how well you're going to be when you're there, how you're going to recover. And now they're going through that process again, that they're going to have to go through the chemo and hopefully that will all work well in Manitoba. We certainly pray for his successful recovery, but, again, as recent as two weeks ago that was something that that family had to go through, with all of their angst and the emotions that go with that.

* (11:40)

So getting back, though, to the people in the system, Mr. Speaker, yes, this was a—this is a nice facility in Brandon once it's there. The people are very good there. They're great practitioners. There're some individuals that obviously have moved from outside of Brandon and from Winnipeg, and I surprisingly got—not so surprising, I suppose—got some calls from them saying, you know, I just moved into Brandon. I'm looking for child care for our daughter because I have to work. My wife has to work, and I have to do my very important work at the cancer treatment centre and I can't find child care in Brandon because it's not available. Our wait-lists are up to 400 people. Not to say that one individual's more important than another, but maybe some planning would have been a good thing to do in terms of this government to make sure that child-care spaces were available in Brandon and that that funding was available to expand those spaces.

So, in closing, Mr. Speaker, you know it's easy to take credit for success from other people, but in the end it's the doctors, the nurses, the staff and, of course, the patients that are among the most important in Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Thanks for giving me an opportunity to talk about rural CancerCare hubs.

I'd really like to say that over time, like everybody here has examples of where cancer has been in the family or been in—with their friends, and last year was terribly hard for me. One of my teaching colleagues was diagnosed with cancer and had to be treated in Winnipeg, and they had no place to stay. It was going to cost them a lot of money. So I

do have a brother-in-law here, Mr. Speaker, and I said, you know what? I'll move out and just give my apartment to them. And it just shows how even if it's not family, it's friends that need the help—that where we have to stand out—and I'm not sure if the CancerCare hubs would have meant that she could have stayed in Flin Flon. But I'm sure hoping that these hubs will give that choice because I think everybody would like to stay close to home where their friends and relatives are. And I know in my specific example she was very fortunate to have the care she had, and now when I hear that Flin Flon will be getting a CancerCare hub it really excites me that this province is working together to make health care even better for all Manitobans. It's not just centred in Winnipeg, that there is communities outside Winnipeg that are going to have CancerCare hubs and this will allow people to be treated fairly throughout the province. So I commend the Province for that, thank you.

The CancerCare hubs, you notice that they're all over Manitoba. They're north, south, east, west. The hubs will be staffed with new cancer patient advocates who will take care of scheduling appointments and co-ordinating faster care for rural patients. I think this is important. My mother, being that she was 80-some years old, she needed an advocate for her when she was going through the medical process, and I think it's really good that the Province is stepping up, realizing the co-ordination can be very, very hard on some of these patients because they have other things to think about. So I think that is important.

I think what else is important, that we have successful reversed the damage caused by the PC cuts to health care in the 1990s. I mean, we're still hiring more doctors and nurses, and so we got to move on from that. We have the shortest wait times and the third lowest rate of cancer in Canada.

Another big thing that was with my friend is we are covering the cost of cancer drugs, reducing wait times and enhancing supports for rural patients and for Manitobans who want to quit smoking. So we're working in a positive direction. We're working to—instead of waiting to deal with the patients let's deal with the causes. Let's, you know, have stop smoking programs. Let's look at different diets that can actually add to a longer life and let's look at that for not just some Manitobans, but for all Manitobans.

We're investing, like I say, dollars all across Manitoba to make sure that Manitoba is at the cutting

edge of health care. And I know on both sides of the Leg. here, we're all interested in better health care for all Manitobans. And I have to say that with working together, and that—the word together is so important. Together we can accomplish so much. But like Einstein said, the definition of insanity is doing things over and over again and expecting a different result.

And I wish the honourable members on this side of the Leg., on the opposition, would realize their plans about cuts or their plans about always criticizing, is only working against them. And I hope that we can work together making health care even better in Manitoba and in these CancerCare hubs.

Like, I know Flin Flon is also scheduled to have their ER redone, which is very important because now we'll have opportunities, maybe, to do operations or even extend better health care right in my own hometown of Flin Flon.

Flin Flon, like I say, and I mentioned before, is on the border with Saskatchewan. Half—50 per cent of the patients in Flin Flon actually come from the Saskatchewan side, so we're actually working together with Saskatchewan to make health care even better and working together.

So, I just want to go on record to congratulate our side of the House for working together, putting this bill across, rural CancerCare hubs, because it means a lot to rural Manitoba.

So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet.

Audio system failure

Mr. Speaker: One moment, please. I regret to interrupt the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), but we're—seem to be having some difficulty with the microphone system. So if you'd just bear with us for a few moments, please.

* (11:50)

I'm going to ask the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet, please, if he would, just to make sure that his microphone's working.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Check.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. All right, then we're going to revert back to start of the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet's comments, and we'll start the clock

from there. The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet has the floor.

Mr. Ewasko: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and as I was saying, I thank my colleagues on this side of the House and also colleagues from the other side of the House that gave me a warm applause when you had mentioned my riding to be able to speak to this resolution today. So I do take this opportunity to put a few record—few words on the record.

We all believe that it is important to make investments in improving how patients journey through health-care system when they are fighting cancer. Mr. Speaker, I take a look at the resolution and the part, the whereas when we're talking about the 16 rural chemotherapy sites into CancerCare hubs, the upgrading. Couple questions that I'm going to be having is: Has those upgrades happened? When are they happening, and what is the timeline? Because I believe that there has been quite a few announcements before the election, during the election, that hasn't quite come to fruition.

So it is very interesting to hear and to see and to read in this resolution of the upgrades that are going to be happening.

I know in Pinawa we have a fantastic site that brings therapy to various constituents all the way across from La Verendrye constituency as well as the Lac du Bonnet constituency, but my question is again: When is this going to be happening?

I know that the personal care home in Lac du Bonnet is a little bit behind time right now, so I'm still keeping hope that it is going to be built and everything is going to be—is going to continue moving forward, but I guess time will tell, Mr. Speaker.

Working together—the member from Flin Flon referenced it in his few words that he put on the record to this resolution. Working together. Yes, it's a great dream that both sides of the House can work together on various projects.

I know that within the last month when the budget was brought down—the Budget 2013—I know that the minister referenced—the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) referenced on more than one occasion where he had the prebudget process and consultations, and from this side of the House, we've been asking questions along the lines of, well, did anyone or group of people stand up at those budget consultations and actually ask for a PST increase by

one point, which is—equates to about a 14 per cent increase.

So there's one example that I'm not quite sure, as the member from Flin Flon had referenced, the working together piece with grassroots Manitobans. I'm not even quite sure if they really mean that, Mr. Speaker.

Another example is the process and the consultations with the amalgamations with various municipalities. The Minister for Local Government (Mr. Lemieux) was down in southeastern Manitoba in Ste. Anne and had referenced the fact that, no, he wasn't trying to strongly encourage municipalities—or I should say, discourage municipalities from having those public consultations or those town hall meetings, because all would—all it would end up doing is cause bad feelings for years to come.

So, as the member from Flin Flon had referenced, I'm not quite sure how much public consultation really want—this government really wants to have. So—but let's get into some more of the resolution on the rural CancerCare hubs. Now, we know that the idea, as far as the CancerCare hub, the concept, had started in the Morden-Winkler at Boundary Trails Health Centre when physicians came forward with questions about how to improve their community CancerCare program, Mr. Speaker. The program got off the ground when the more senior doctors in the health region co-ordinated with and provided assistance to other doctors who were less experienced. In particular, these doctors with less experience may have lacked expertise and would have had a smaller volume of cases under their belt. Teaming up with senior physicians meant an opportunity to learn from colleagues with a focus in oncology, and it proved to be a real opportunity for advanced learning.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as the member from Brandon West and the member from Morden-Winkler had mentioned previously, I would just like to note that we're all wearing our daffodils today. And I look across the way and there's some members that are not wearing theirs in regards to commemorating CancerCare month here in Manitoba.

Now, we've all been touched in one way or another on our—on personal basis with that ruthless cancer, and I would just like to put on record just a—my own personal story in regards to a family member who had to go through that battle with cancer, and that'd be my mother, Mr. Speaker. A few years ago, my mom was diagnosed with breast

cancer, and so, at that time, when she was going through many, many different feelings and decisions, we had to—there was a temporary oncologist in the province, actually, from California. And she had mentioned to my mom that possibly we should send the sample down to the States for a—and I just want to make sure I get this word for the test correct—it's an Oncotype DX report or analysis. And so it was sort of interesting that it took an oncologist from California, being a temporary oncologist here in Manitoba, to come up with that suggestion to send it down.

Well, so what does this test give us? What is the reason for this report or the test? Well, Mr. Speaker, it basically—if the sample goes down and gets tested, the results can come back and it basically verifies whether you need radiation and chemo, or chemo, or just radiation could possibly take care of the cancer.

Well, of course, if that was a test that was going to help us move forward with my mom's diagnosis, obviously we were going to proceed. We ended up sending the sample down to the States and received the results back and, thank goodness, the results came back where my mom would only—and I shouldn't say only need radiation, but it sure was a relief as far as my mother not having to go through the whole chemotherapy process. The radiation did take care of it and my mother continues to go on for tests on a yearly basis to just—sort of, for checkups.

* (12:00)

Now, one disturbing thing, Mr. Speaker, as I—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please.

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Deputy Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I—sorry to interrupt—I'm on House business, I'm wondering if I might have—we might have leave of the House to extend the morning sitting by six minutes due to the fact that I believe we lost six minutes of House time because of a—because of the speaker—their speaking—the microphone malfunctions, and I wonder if we have leave of the House to extend the sitting by six minutes.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to extend the sitting time this morning by six minutes?
[Agreed]

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet, I regret to interrupt.

Mr. Ewasko: Okay, so as I was saying, the test came back. My mom got the radiation, took care of it. Now, looking back, the test that we had to send down to the States, Mr. Speaker, cost \$4,184. My mother had written extensive letters to the government, to the Minister of Health and had requested that fee to be not waived, but reimbursed, and it took quite some time. And one of my questions as well is, I wonder if that test is being openly provided or that option being openly provided to women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer, whether that process is even being offered to them. I can't imagine the amount of money that was saved by my mother going through radiation as opposed to being diagnosed with breast cancer here in Manitoba and then being forced to go through radiation and chemotherapy. My mom must have saved the health-care system tens of thousands of dollars here. So I will put on record that after quite a few letters being sent my mom did get reimbursement. So I would hate to not put that on the record, but it did take quite some time.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, the resolution, parts of it seems to speak well to what we're looking for here in Manitoba, but I'm going to have to conclude there—

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

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I want to thank all the members who've put their comments on the record regarding this resolution.

Certainly, the therefore portion of the resolution is something I think that all of us could agree with that all of those health-care professionals who are delivering care in these difficult circumstances should be commended and thanked for the work that they do, not only the medical assistance that they give, but certainly the personal assistance that they give in very difficult circumstances. And I've heard from many people who have gone through treatment for cancer about the wonderful support that they received from the medical staff.

I regret that the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) didn't bring forward this resolution to us individually. I am sure we could have probably looked for some amendments that would've allowed the resolution to pass today. Of course, there might

not be time for the resolution to pass today, but it'll still stay within the legislative process. Mr. Speaker, it could always come back in this session. We have a long time for this session to go on yet, and the member for Selkirk might do well to come forward and bring forward some discussion with our Health critic about possible amendments.

I particularly regret that in the resolution it does not speak about the great contribution that foundations make to the care for cancer centres. I know in Steinbach the vast majority of the money that went for the cancer centre came from the Bethesda Foundation and, ultimately, of course, from private individuals who've given money to ensure that that happen. And it's been said many different times, even though the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) was there for the ribbon cutting, that it would not have happened had it not been for the generous private contributions.

And I know members opposite often talk about private health care, but, of course, without those private contributions, Mr. Speaker, that cancer centre in Steinbach wouldn't have happened. And yet the member for Selkirk regrettably didn't mention any of the private contributions from areas such as his own and from mine and from the member for Morden. And really, all of us as MLAs, and those individuals who bring forward private contributions, I don't know why he would exclude that. I don't know why

he wouldn't give credit to the many individuals who have private donations.

So there's time for him. He can speak to the Health critic about amendments to this resolution, because we have a long session yet ahead of us and often these things get revived at different times, Mr. Speaker. And, if he takes that approach, if he truly is concerned and wants to have a unified approach on this, I'm sure that we can find that path. I'm sort of shocked. I think the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) has in the past brought forward resolutions to us individually before they came to the House so we could find unanimity and agreement. I'm not sure why he would be playing politics with this. I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure he has his own reasons, but I won't try to reflect on his particular motivations. But, if he wants to, he can certainly speak to our Health critic in the days ahead that we have in the session—the many days ahead that we have in the session. We can have a discussion, and I would encourage him—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) will have six minutes remaining.

The hour being past 12 noon, this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 30, 2013

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