

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 2, 2013

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 35—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Compliance and Enforcement Measures)

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 35, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Compliance and Enforcement Measures), now be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, this bill enhances and consolidates the compliance and enforcement provisions under The Consumer Protection Act and clarifies how and when they can be used by the Consumer Protection Office in the administration and enforcement of this act.

The amendment will benefit consumers and businesses by making it clear what steps the Consumer Protection Office can use to remedy a situation in the marketplace to solve an issue or follow up a complaint. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Any further introduction of bills? Seeing none, we'll move on to petitions.

PETITIONS

St. Ambroise Beach Provincial Park

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for the petition:

The St. Ambroise provincial park was hard hit by the 2011 flood, resulting in the park's ongoing closure and the loss of local access to Lake Manitoba, as well as untold harm to the ecosystem and wildlife in the region.

The park's closure is having a negative impact in many areas, including disruptions to local tourism, hunting and fishing operations, diminished economic and employment opportunities and the loss of the local store and decrease in property values.

Local residents and visitors alike want St. Ambroise provincial park to be reopened as soon as possible.

And we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the appropriate ministers of the provincial government consider repairing St. Ambroise provincial park and its access points to their pre-flood conditions so the park can be reopened for the 2013 season or earlier if possible.

Signed—this petition's signed by B. Prefontaine, R. Downing, R. Scharf and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

Provincial Road 520 Renewal

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The rural municipality of Lac du Bonnet and Alexander are experiencing record growth due especially to an increasing number of Manitobans retiring in cottage country.

The population in the RM of Lac du Bonnet grows exponentially in the summer months due to increased cottage use.

Due to population growth, Provincial Road 520 experiences heavy traffic, especially during the summer months.

PR 520 connects cottage country to the Pinawa Hospital and as such is frequently used by emergency medical services to transport patients.

PR 520 is in such poor condition that there are serious concerns about its safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to recognize the serious safety concerns of Provincial Road 520 and to address its poor condition by prioritizing its renewal.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by G. Goulet, R. Sylvester and T. Proctor and hundreds of other fine Manitobans.

Highway 217 Bridge Repair

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The bridge over the Red River on Highway 217 outside of St. Jean Baptiste was built in 1947 and provides a vital link for economic opportunities and community development on both sides of the river.

The Department of Infrastructure and Transportation closed the bridge after spending significant sums of money and time on rehabilitation efforts in the summer of 2012.

Individuals require numerous trips across the river each day to access schools, businesses and health-care facilities. The bridge closure causes daily undue hardship and inconvenience for residents due to time requirements and higher transportation costs.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to repair or replace the existing bridge as soon as possible to allow communities on both sides of the river to return to regular activities.

And this petition is signed by L. Roy, A. Reid and M. Bouchard and hundreds of many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Any further petitions?

Hydro Capital Development–NFAT Review

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba Hydro has mandated—was mandated by the provincial government to commence a \$21-billion capital development plan to service uncertain electricity export markets.

(2) In the last five years, competition from alternative energy sources is decreasing the price and demand for Manitoba's hydroelectricity and causing the financial viability of this capital plan to be questioned.

(3) The \$21-billion capital plan requires Manitoba Hydro to increase domestic electricity rates by up to 4 per cent annually for the next 20 years and possibly more if export opportunities fail to materialize.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro create a complete and transparent Needs For and Alternatives To review of Manitoba Hydro's total capital development plan to ensure the financial viability of Manitoba Hydro.

This is signed by D. Cimarno, C. Cure, J. Leveros and hundreds and hundreds of other Manitobans.

Ring Dike Road–Ste. Rose du Lac

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Ring Dike Road is a well-used gravel municipal road that is used as a secondary road in and out of the community of Ste. Rose du Lac.

Given this heavy pattern of use, there is a strong interest in the community in seeing the Ring Dike Road upgraded to a paved provincial road.

It would be most cost-effective to upgrade the Ring Dike Road to a provincial road at the same time that upgrades are being undertaken at the junction of PTH 68 and PTH 5.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider upgrading the Ring Dike Road at Ste. Rose du Lac into a provincial road; and

(2) To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider upgrading the Ring Dike Road at the same time that work is being done on the junction of PTH 68 and PTH 5.

This petition is signed by B. Monkman, D. Guyot, G. Guyot and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by K. Adams, R. Preteau, J. Reys and many other Manitobans.

Hydro Capital Development—NFAT Review

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): I wish to present the following petition to the Manitoba Legislature.

And these are the reasons for the petition:

Manitoba Hydro was mandated by the provincial government to commence a \$21-billion capital development plan to service uncertain electricity export markets.

In the last five years, competition from alternative energy sources is decreasing the price and demand for Manitoba's hydroelectricity and causing the financial viability of this capital plan to be questioned.

The \$21-billion capital plan requires Manitoba Hydro to increase domestic electricity rates by up to 4 per cent annually for the next 20 years and possibly more if export opportunities fail to materialize.

* (13:40)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro create a complete and transparent Needs For and Alternatives To review of Manitoba Hydro's total capital development plan to ensure the financial viability of Manitoba Hydro.

And this petition is signed by D. Loeppky, A. Fehr, L. Janzen and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

And this petition is signed by G. Thompson, M. Savage, R. Parker and thousands of other Manitobans.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government not to raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is signed by K. Fedoruk, E. Unrau, S. Murray and thousands of many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by B. Malton, R. Book, S. Bjornson and many other concerned Manitobans.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without legally requiring a referendum.

An increase of the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans from a democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government not to raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This is presented on behalf of S. Kendrick, K. Calden, S. Romancere and thousands of other Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate any municipality with fewer than 1,000 constituents.

The provincial government did not consult with or notify the affected municipalities of this decision prior to the Throne Speech announced on November 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

If the provincial government imposes amalgamations, local democratic representation will be drastically limited while not providing any real improvements in cost savings.

Local governments are further concerned that amalgamation will fail to address the serious issues currently facing municipalities, including an absence of reliable infrastructure funding and timely flood compensation.

Municipalities deserve to be treated with respect. Any amalgamations should be voluntary in nature and led by the municipalities themselves.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Local Government afford local governments the respect they deserve and reverse his decision to force amalgamations with fewer than 1,000 constituents to amalgamate.

This petition's signed by K. Chescu, B. Chescu, J. Slobozian and so many thousands of Manitobans.

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

Background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate any municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents.

The provincial government did not consult with or notify the affected municipalities of this decision prior to the Throne Speech announcement on November 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

If the provincial government imposes amalgamations, local democratic representation will be drastically limited while not providing any real improvements in cost savings.

Local governments are further concerned that amalgamation will fail to address the serious issues currently facing municipalities, including an absence of reliable infrastructure funding and timely flood compensation.

Municipalities deserve to be treated with respect. Any amalgamations should be voluntary in nature and led by the municipalities themselves.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Local Government afford local governments the respect they deserve and reverse his decision to force municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents to amalgamate.

And this petition is signed by R. Unger, H. Unger, A. Rempel and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

And this is signed by G. Partridge, B. Gainor, B. Graham and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

There are—these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government not to raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

Signed by M.R. Bird, L. Bird, N. Bergen and thousands and thousands more, Mr. Speaker.

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

(2) Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

(3) An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

* (13:50)

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. I'm having difficulty hearing the honourable member for Arthur-Virden.

I'm asking for the co-operation of the honourable member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler), please, to allow

me to please hear the honourable member for Arthur-Virden.

The honourable member for Arthur-Virden, to continue.

Mr. Maguire: (4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is signed by E. Harrison, J. Ransom, W. Ireland and many, many other Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

(2) Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

(3) An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government not to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by R. Fuller, V. Fuller, M. Pulf and many, many other Manitobans.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Flood Update

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to once again provide an update on the evolving flood situation.

The Red River continues to rise and conditions remain favourable at this time. Flows on most Red River tributaries are either stable or declining. Water levels at James Avenue dropped to 18.3 feet this morning, and levels and flows in Winnipeg have stabilized as a result of the operation of the Red River Floodway and the Portage Diversion.

Cooler temperatures in the western portion of the province have continued to slow runoff, particularly in the Parkland region. Warmer temperatures over the next two days will increase melting and runoff and result in higher flows in rivers.

A flood warning has been issued along the Assiniboine River from Virden to Brandon. Flooding in these areas is expected to primarily affect agricultural land.

Flows on the Assiniboine River into the Portage reservoir remain high at 20,100 cubic feet per second. The Portage Diversion is handling flows over 15,000 cubic feet per second, while flows on the Assiniboine River downstream of Portage are being maintained at 5,300 cubic feet per second to reduce the risk of ice jams downstream.

Water is currently spilling over the Portage Diversion fail-safe as designed, but is also flowing over the east dike due to an ice jam in the channel. Provincial crews are working fast to move an excavator in to deepen the fail-safe in order to prevent uncontrolled flooding.

Significant ice remains on the Assiniboine River between Poplar Point and PR 248. Conditions are being closely monitored, and a high-water advisory continues for the Assiniboine River below the Portage Diversion between Portage la Prairie and Headingley due to the increased potential for ice jamming.

Saskatchewan is temporarily increasing outflows from the Tobin reservoir to manage high flows and ice runs on the North Saskatchewan River. Flows at The Pas are expected to be high but remain within banks. A new forecast for the Saskatchewan River is expected next week.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I thank the minister for the statement.

Certainly we know that this time of year, and in many years, as we all know in the past, has certainly been a challenge for the province, and we certainly appreciate those updates as we sit in this House. And one thing that's very clear, Mr. Speaker, is that the

cooler temperatures certainly are not necessarily welcome outside, but we know that it does slow down the thaw, and we're certainly pleased that that thaw has been slow and a progressive one that makes the water just not flow quite so quickly.

Also, the Portage Diversion, I hope the minister and his staff is, of course, keeping a close eye on that. As we know, the inflows don't necessarily match the outflows, and we know that we want to make sure that those folks around Lake Manitoba don't go through what they did in 2011. And, of course, the Saskatchewan River update, we're looking forward to that next week as that report comes available.

And also, just to share with the House, I had the opportunity to be out at the Assiniboia Downs welcome breakfast, and I can tell you that the track is dry and they'll be able to proceed with the race on Sunday.

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his update, and what I would ask the minister in the future to provide us, like we have for the Red River, what the peaks will be at various points. And I presume that the flood forecasting is improved from what it was in 2011 and that the minister should now also have some estimates as to what the peak may be at Portage, at Brandon, at Souris and so on.

And this information would clearly be helpful, and perhaps the minister next time he gives a flood report, presumably on Monday in this Chamber, can give us that sort of projection and tell us where we stand in terms of the forecasting, which was a concern.

Clearly, the flows along the Assiniboine River at this juncture, which is still pretty early in terms of a flood, are quite high. And clearly there's some concern about what it will be and what it will peak at, so I look forward to getting that information next time around.

I would also appreciate from the minister sometime next week an update in terms of the farmers between Virden and Brandon, because this has been an ongoing issue and farmers are still

concerned about, you know, what the compensation has been in the past, what the plans are for the future in terms of that section. And it would be helpful to have an update on that, again, sometime next week if that's possible. Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today from Arthur A. Leach school 24 grade 9 students under the direction of Rene Delaurier. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau). On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

And also seated in the public gallery from—we have guests today from the Asian Heritage Society, the India School of Dance and the Filipino Journal, who are also the guests of the honourable member for St. Norbert. On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

And we have with us from Kildonan-East Collegiate 17 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Elliot Unger. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe). On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Tax Increases Tax-and-Spend Policies

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, the spenDP's very desperate rationale for massive tax hikes over the last year and a bit, impacting to the tune of \$1,600 per household in this province, has shifted from initially being about flood works, then about infrastructure, then about hospitals, then about schools, then about splash pads, Mr. Speaker.

But yesterday they trotted out that old chestnut, global economic uncertainty. Yet Manitoba's tax revenues are the highest they've been in history, and they've gone up during this uncertainty.

And the cause of global uncertainty, well, the principle one, is tax-and-spend unsustainable management practices. So let's think about this for a second: The spenDP says due to global uncertainty caused by tax-and-spend governments, they are planning on taxing and spending more, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:00)

Why adopt the failed policies of other jurisdictions? Is the Premier trying to solve a problem, or is he trying to create a bigger problem?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Fort Whyte, is trying to be clever, but actually what he's doing is being very scary. That is the most flawed analysis I have ever heard about the global economic uncertainty.

The austerity program that is going on in Europe right now has caused countries like Great Britain to enter into their third recession in the last four years because of the harshness with which they have attacked health care, education and unemployment in that country by making more people unemployed.

And the IMF recently gave a message to the government of Canada. They said to the government of Canada: Be very careful about how hard you clamp down on your spending; ensure that you keep the economy growing.

And our Building and Renewal Plan will move the Manitoba economy forward for the next decade.

Government Advertising Campaign

Mr. Pallister: Well, the member for St. Boniface makes a pretty good bogeyman, Mr. Speaker, but the fact is he cannot get his own spending under control.

And as evidence of that, we now have a spendDP quarter-million-dollar promotional advertising campaign which the Premier says, of course, is to educate and inform. Anyone who's seen the ads knows they have all the good stuff, but they don't mention the PST hike. It's like a restaurant menu that has pictures of the food but no prices, unlike the Eaton's catalogue around Christmastime at our house, where my mother always highlighted the prices because somebody's got to pay for this.

Now—so let's think about this, Mr. Speaker. The government is using Manitoba taxpayers' money to buy advertisements to sell their budget. Why are they misinforming Manitobans by leaving out the most important aspect of that budget to them by leaving out the tax hikes, the NDPST increase, which is real for Manitobans?

Mr. Selinger: Well, actually, again, I do appreciate the question.

The member opposite will know that the amount being spent to let people know what's going on in Manitoba with respect to the budget is the exact

same amount that was in place in 1999; it has not increased.

And in 1999, they never put in their ads that they were going to fire a thousand nurses, Mr. Speaker. They never put in their ads that they are never—put in their ads that they're going to drive doctors out of Manitoba. Over 250 doctors were being driven out of the province of Manitoba. And I don't recall them ever informing the public that they were going to lay off and fire 700 teachers.

If the members opposite want to be sanctimonious, why doesn't the Leader of the Opposition own up to the fact that he wants to visit indiscriminate cuts on the public service of Manitoba, lay off correction workers, lay off teachers, lay off nurses? That's what his plan's all about.

Impact on Manitobans

Mr. Pallister: I'd recommend a trip to Truthtown for the gentleman, Mr. Speaker, but he'd never find his way there, and he's never been there.

The fact of the matter is that this government has imposed the largest tax increases in the last year on Manitobans they've ever seen. It broadened the tax base, and now they're deepening it. Cars, gas, diesel fuel, fees, life insurance costs, haircuts, group benefits, home insurance—we're talking a half a billion dollars less in the households of Manitobans.

It might not sound like much for the member for St. Boniface. His—the NDP Cabinet's pretty well paid here, okay? Many costs are covered for them. But real people in real places across this province are experiencing these cuts. To a senior, one less trip to visit a grandchild; to a single mom, a bill that has to wait; to a young couple, a longer time before they can buy a house or pay down their mortgage: real consequences for real people.

Let's think about this: The Premier tells Manitobans it's necessary for them to find savings. Why can't he find some savings too?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, when the member opposite talks about tough love and when he talks about a chill, what he's really talking about is the same failed policies that he practised in the 1990s.

Now, let's review what he did for single parents in the 1990s. He denied them access to the National Child Benefit; \$500 per family was ripped out of their pockets by the policy of the Leader of the Opposition. Every person on social assistance had

their benefits cut by \$150. Homeowners had their property tax credit cut from \$325 to \$250.

It's \$700 today in Manitoba. And the property tax credit for seniors went up to \$1,100. The personal exemption went up another \$250. Mr. Speaker, our plan keeps Manitoba affordable, it keeps the province growing, it trains young people and it creates jobs.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

The honourable member for Charleswood has the floor.

PST Increase Government Presence at Rally

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): It would sure be nice if this Premier would stop living in the past, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady) and the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) a very, very simple question: Will they stand up with their constituents at tonight's rally and oppose the NDPST increase, or are they going to scurry out the back doors?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member asked us to stop living in the past. Why don't they give us a policy for the future, then?

And if they want to go out into the Kirkfield Park area, maybe they could finally withdraw their idea of shutting down the Grace Hospital which they've had on the books for the last 15 years.

We're building an access centre at the great hospital. We have a special program to provide physicians, nurse practitioners, physiotherapists to go out to the homes of seniors in the Kirkfield Park area to make sure they can stay in their homes as long as possible.

We're building a health-care system for the future. We're building hospitals for the future. We're building roads for the future. We're building schools for the future. We have a plan for the future and the best insurance of keeping that plan going is to keep a government in place that listens to Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

PST Increase Government Presence at Rally

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Well, the question is: Does the Premier plan on being at the rally tonight and actually listening to Manitobans, Mr. Speaker?

And as the member for Kirkfield Park and the member for Assiniboia do not have the courage to stand up for their constituents, I would like to ask the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) and the member for Radisson (Mr. Jha) a very simple question: Will they stand up with their constituents at tonight's rally and oppose the NDPST increase, or will they do like their other colleagues and just scurry out the back?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the members opposite know that any question that is put in front of the Legislature is a question to the government and any member of the government can choose to answer it.

I would say this, Mr. Speaker: I know the member from St. Paul is eager to attend the rally tonight and I hope he will be there. I hope they'll all be there.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

The honourable First Minister to continue responding.

Mr. Selinger: I only hope when he shows up to the rally he will indicate to them where the money is being invested in Manitoba that will give us a prosperous future. I hope he will tell them that he supports—Mr. Speaker, if they ask a question, I just—they should offer the courtesy of listening to the answer.

He should tell them that we're going to keep the Seven Oaks Hospital open that they wanted to close. He should tell them we're going to keep the Grace Hospital open that we wanted to close. He should tell them that we're going to build roads in Manitoba, and he should tell them that we're going to build new schools for young families and daycares for young families so Manitobans can stay working, that we can continue to grow the economy. I hope he will tell them that he's supporting the Manitoba Building and Renewal Plan, Mr. Speaker.

**PST Increase
Government Presence at Rally**

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): As the members for Kirkfield Park and Assiniboia and St. Norbert and Radisson do not have the courage to stand up for their constituents, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the member for Southdale (Ms. Selby) and the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) a very simple question: Will they stand up for their constituents at tonight's rally and oppose this spendPST increase, Mr. Speaker, or will they, too, scurry out the back door?

* (14:10)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): You know, one of the better experiences I've had, Mr. Speaker, was canvassing door to door in Southdale with the member of the Legislature for that community. And every door that we went to they said, we really need a school out here; they said, we really need a daycare centre out here. And just the last two weeks, we announced the new Sage Creek school in the Southdale area. And in that school we will build a daycare centre for 114 spaces to serve the young families in that area.

I know the member for Southdale is representing that community. I went door to door with her, we listened to what the needs of those people are, and we will get on and build those assets for the people of that community.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I just want to draw to the attention of honourable members who are—the level is going up a little bit.

We have a lot of young students with us here this afternoon and I'm sure honourable members would want to leave a good impression for their visit to the Manitoba Legislature, many of them, perhaps, for their first time, and we'd want them to come back here and to observe our proceedings here in the Assembly. So I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members, please, keep the level down a little bit and allow the questions to be posed and the answers in return.

The honourable member for Riding Mountain has the floor.

**PST Increase
Government Presence at Rally**

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Mr. Speaker, a few questions back the Premier said, best policy is keeping the government in place who listens to Manitobas. Well, the Manitobans are

asking this government to be at the rally tonight so that they can give the government their thoughts on where they're going with this PST increase.

So, Mr. Speaker, as the members for Kirkfield Park, Assiniboia, St. Norbert, Radisson, Southdale, Riel do not have the courage to stand up for their constituents, I would like to ask the minister—or the MLA for Seine River and the MLA for Fort Richmond a very simple question: Will they stand up for their constituents tonight at the rally and oppose the PST increase, or are they going to scurry out the back door like so many of these ministers do?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the—I appreciate the question, again, because the member for Riding Mountain will know that in this budget there is more money for the No. 10 Highway in the Riding Mountain community, something even the member herself has asked for. We've heard what the member has said; we've heard what the people of that community have said. They've said, we need a better Highway No. 10.

This budget, in our record highways capital plan of over \$622 million, will pave roads all throughout rural Manitoba to meet the needs of the citizens of rural Manitoba.

**PST Increase
Government Presence at Rally**

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Since the Premier has all the answers for Manitobans, will he come on down to the rally tonight and tell the people of Manitoba why he's raising the PST?

Mr. Speaker, the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady), Assiniboia, St. Norbert, Radisson, Southdale, Riel, Seine River and Fort Richmond don't have the courage to stand up for their constituents.

I'd like to, Mr. Speaker, ask the member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun) a very simple question, because I'm hearing from her angry constituents: Will she stand up with her constituents at tonight's rally and oppose the NDPST increase, or will she scurry out the back door with the rest of her colleagues?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the question of what we're doing for the good people of Rossmere, because one of the things they told us they needed was a new Disraeli overpass, and I was very happy to be there with the member from Rossmere and the member from

Elmwood when we snipped the ribbon on the new Disraeli overpass so people can have access to their communities.

And now, Mr. Speaker, now that they have access to the community, we've announced a new housing project, a new housing project for the people of that area, housing that will allow people of various abilities to have access to safe, decent and affordable housing for the good people of Rossmere and the good people of East Kildonan. That's what they asked for; that's what we're providing.

Lake Winnipeg Phosphorus Reduction Targets

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, for years Manitoba Liberals have called upon the NDP to address the problem of algae choking Lake Winnipeg by reducing the phosphorus going into it by some 50 per cent.

In June of 2011 the government announced, with great fanfare, Bill 46, The Save Lake Winnipeg Act, and said that they had reset the NDP's existing target, which was then 10 per cent of phosphorus reduction, up to a 50 per cent reduction in phosphorus.

I ask the Premier: What exact percentage of phosphorus reduction to Lake Winnipeg has been achieved since 2011?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Well, I thank the new-found interest, Mr. Speaker, of the member in Lake Winnipeg. [*interjection*]

Yes, actually, it's—actually, Mr. Speaker, I was going to begin my remarks by welcoming everybody back. It's nice to be here. It's great to get a question and some interest in the environment from members opposite. So I thank the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) for prompting me on reminding him about their profound care for the environment.

But I just also want to remind the member who—

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

The honourable member for River Heights has the floor.

Nutrient Monitoring LaSalle, Seine and Pembina Rivers

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the minister is mistaken about what he called my new-found interest. I've been asking questions on

Lake Winnipeg for more than a decade. It's this government which has neglected Lake Winnipeg time and time again.

Mr. Speaker, the Winnipeg Free Press published an editorial today on the need for the NDP government to monitor the nutrients that make it—their way into Lake Winnipeg. I quote: "Mr. Selinger should commit to improved monitoring"—

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

I'm sure the honourable member for River Heights knows that we're supposed to reference—and I issue this as a caution to all members of the House—we're supposed to reference other members of the House by their constituency name or ministers by their portfolio.

So I'm cautioning the honourable member for River Heights, please use those two as your guide.

Mr. Gerrard: I'm sorry, I was quoting from what was said. It's the Premier should commit to improved monitoring of nutrients, starting with a deadline by which that will happen on La Salle, Seine and Pembina rivers.

I ask the Premier: What are the deadlines for improved monitoring of the nutrients on the La Salle, Seine and the Pembina rivers?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): So I was getting to the point about the member's new-found interest, Mr. Speaker, in freshwater health in this province. And I know yesterday he got up on a matter of privilege and said that his record was not relevant to anything in this House or anything to happen in Canada.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, there might be over 300 members in that House of Commons, but we know his record; he can't run from it. And maybe we—he should just be reminded—he should be reminded, Mr. Speaker—that when he was the science and technology minister in Ottawa, he cut science grants by 64 per cent. I think there was like 1,400 positions eliminated in Environment Canada and Natural Resources. He cut freshwater research by 55 per cent. That's his record. You can't talk out of both sides of your mouth, sir.

Mr. Speaker: Listening to the comments provided by the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship, I am requesting that when responses to questions are being put on the record here that the comments please go through the Chair. You do not want to personalize the debate that goes on in here,

and so I'm asking the co-operation of all honourable members: comments, questions through the Chair, please.

Lake Winnipeg Phosphorus Reduction Targets

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the most ridiculous and inaccurate lies have been stated by this government in that last answer. The minister should be ashamed of himself.

We are concerned about the state of Lake Winnipeg right now. The minister twice has avoided answering questions that Manitobans are very concerned about the future of our lake, Lake Winnipeg, which is now the most threatened lake on the planet.

I ask the minister: By what date will his government achieve the 50 per cent reduction in phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg?

* (14:20)

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Well, Mr. Speaker, the issues around Lake Winnipeg are very, very serious, and we expect, as well, though, that the issues will be raised by a serious questioner.

But, Mr. Speaker, in this budget there are very significant new investments in making sure that our waters are better protected. And, indeed, just within our park strategy that we recently announced, there's some \$20 million for improvements to the Lake Winnipeg basin, just in our parks alone. And I can get onto the issues around the obligations and the investments that we will be making with the City of Winnipeg in ensuring better health for Lake Winnipeg as well.

But, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to just remind members of this House that we are very committed as a government here in Manitoba to work with the Ontario government to make sure that, unlike our friends in Ottawa, we have the—

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

Canadian Tire Advanced Cloud Computing Centre

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, despite global uncertain economic times, our government support for business is growing the economy. We are recommitting to attract—

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

We still have a fair amount of time left in question period. I'm sure all honourable members that want to ask a question will have the opportunity. So I am asking for the co-operation, please give me a chance to hear the honourable members when they ask their question. I'm sure if there was a breach of the rule you'd want me to rule on that.

So I'm asking for your co-operation allowing me to hear the honourable member for St. Norbert.

Mr. Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, despite global uncertain economic times, our government's support for business is continuing to grow the economy. We are continuing to attract, invest in creating jobs and building momentum in downtown Winnipeg and across the province. High-tech jobs pay—play a key role in 21st century knowledge economy.

Can the Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines please tell us about the announcement that he made today?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, rarely have I heard of effusive praise from a vice-president of a company as I heard today.

The new centre will provide the company of Canadian Tire, which includes Canadian Tire Retail, Mark's, FGL Sports, PartSource, gas and financial services, with 20 times more computing power and 10 times more bandwidth.

The project will add 50 new Winnipeg-based employees to the team. Job creation over the life of the project is expected to be 200 positions. Estimated capital expenditures are \$18.4 million in year one, and 10.7 in year two. The company will also have partnerships with University of Manitoba, Winnipeg student placement, Red River College.

Mr. Speaker, the company came here to develop a community, a computer centre, a cloud centre. And after seeing, to quote the VP of the company, the magic of Winnipeg, they are now going to have not only a cloud centre but a data centre and a digital centre because of their partnership of Winnipeg—

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

PST Increase Government Presence at Rally

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, in a recent editorial in the Dauphin Herald referring to

the NDPST increase, the writer said, and I quote: Just as it did with balanced budget legislation in the past, the NDP is thumbing its collective nose at Manitobans, vowing to change the laws to suit its needs, ensuring taxpayers have no say in the increase. End quote.

I would like to ask the minister of Dauphin for—a very simple question: Will he stand—*[interjection]*—the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers). Will he stand up with his constituents at tonight's rally, oppose the NDPST increase, or will he just scurry out the back door with the rest of the pack?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, my neighbours in Dauphin want me to stand up and invest in infrastructure in this province, and that is exactly what I'm going to do.

PST Increase Government Presence at Rally

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, as the member from Dauphin, along with his cohorts from Kirkfield Park, Assiniboia, St. Norbert, Radisson, Southdale, Riel, Seine River, Fort Richmond, Rossmere do not have the courage to stand up for their constituents, I would like to ask the member from Dawson Trail a simple question: Will he stand up with his constituents at tonight's rally and oppose the NDPST, or will he scurry out the back door with the rest of his?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, every member of this side of the House will stand with Manitobans to build our province and support our economy. Every member on this side of the House will stand up against the kind of cuts that the member—the Leader of the Opposition has put on the table. Every member of this side of the House will defend nurses when this—when the people across the way suggest they should be cut.

Every member on this side of the House will defend teachers when members opposite suggest that we have too many of them. And every single member of this House will stand behind a budget that invests in the future of our province, that invests in flood protection, that invests in critical infrastructure and invests in our economy.

PST Increase Government Presence at Rally

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): We welcome the member from Dauphin to come out and speak to the folks tonight.

As the member from Dauphin and member from Dawson Trail do not have the courage to stand up for their constituents, I would like to ask the member from Gimli a very simple question: Will he stand up for the many constituents who will be at the rally tonight and oppose this NDP PST tax increase, or will he scurry out the back door as well, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, the members are at it again. They're leaving the north out, and I rose because, you know, they still have the old highways maps without northern Manitoba on it, but I'm hoping the member opposite, who professes to have an interest in infrastructure—I believe he has a role to do that in this House—will recognize and will tell everyone that we're investing in a historic way in terms of our infrastructure.

When members opposite were in government in the 1990s, Mr. Speaker, they invested about \$85 million a year in our highway system. This year it's \$468 million. Every member of this side of the House stood up and voted for that budget that brought in that. Every member opposite, even though they lobbied for highways in their area, they voted against that investment.

PST Increase Government Presence at Rally

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Well, Mr. Speaker, if he thinks increasing the PST is so good, maybe the spenDP member from St. Boniface could come out tonight's—to tonight's rally at 6 p.m. at the Legislative steps and tell angry Manitobans what he's doing with their spenDP PST.

As we've just witnessed, Mr. Speaker, the members for Dawson Trail and Gimli do not have the courage to stand up for their constituents.

I would like to ask the member from St. James a very simple question: Will she stand up for her constituents at tonight's rally, Mr. Speaker, and oppose the NDPST increase, or is she just going to scurry out the back door too?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that all members on this side of the House have been standing up to protect Manitobans against the imminent flood risk.

And I want to put on the record that the members opposite, the Flat Earth Society, also

known as the PC caucus, still seem to be under the view that we were not under threat because we couldn't operate the Portage Diversion. The member for Portage said, they didn't put anyone at risk, the ice was already gone from the lower Assiniboine. As of yesterday, we had 23 kilometres of ice east of Elie, Mr. Speaker.

I wonder if they're going to stand up, Mr. Speaker, like members on this side have, to protect Manitobans, including Winnipeggers, against flooding.

PST Increase Government Presence at Rally

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): On this side of the House, we stand up for Manitobans.

Minister after minister after minister has been asked to stand up in the last two weeks, and they have not got out of their seats. Why are we paying them ministers' salaries? They do not stand up for Manitobans.

I would like to ask why the member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson), for Dawson Trail and for St. James wouldn't get out of their seats. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the minister for—or the member for the Interlake will get up or will he stand up with his constituents at the rally tonight and oppose the NDP PST increase, or will he scurry out the back door too?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): On that, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you one thing. Every member of this side of the House stood up to vote for a budget that is going to give us the ability to deal with the investments in flood infrastructure that we need, and I would expect members opposite, you know, with some of the comments they made the last time, might also want to stand up and be accountable, including the Leader of the Opposition, who yesterday again said that the Conservatives supported blocking the Portage Diversion.

We had the member for Portage who was suggesting it was authorized by the RCMP, Mr. Speaker. We had to go to court and get an injunction to get that diversion open. If it had been up to members opposite, they would have flooded three municipalities downstream and they would have put people in the city of Winnipeg at risk. Where were they in standing up for those communities?

* (14:30)

PST Increase Government Presence at Rally

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Isn't that the pot calling the kettle black? Lawbreakers, Mr. Speaker, lawbreakers.

The money the spendP are taking out of families' pockets are going directly towards advertising and communications.

As the members for Dauphin, Dawson Trail, Gimli, St. James and the Interlake do not have the courage to stand up for their constituents, I would like to ask the member for The Maples (Mr. Saran) a very simple question: Will he stand up with his constituents at tonight's rally and oppose the NDPST increase, or will he, as well as the others, are going to scurry out the back door?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): First time in my life I ever outmuscled the Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I can say to the members opposite that members on this side of the House certainly do stand with Manitobans who want to see a variety of improvements to the health-care system, including more personal care home environments. We know that all Manitobans want to find exactly the right environment for their loved ones when it's no longer appropriate to stay home. And what we know is that the people in Lac du Bonnet are delighted that they're going to be the recipients of a brand new personal care home, and what I do know also is that the people of Lac du Bonnet and all of Manitoba do not look forward to having home care privatized, which is the policy of the Leader of the Opposition.

PST Increase Government Presence at Rally

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, as the members for Dauphin, Dawson Trail, Gimli, St. James, the Interlake and The Maples do not have the courage to stand up for their constituents, maybe the member from Selkirk would like to come out and speak.

I ask him a very simple question: Will he stand up for his constituents at tonight's rally and oppose the NDPST increase, or will he go out the back door as well?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Well, Mr. Speaker, the member for Portage again had the opportunity to correct the record. And I'm sure we can probably

arrange leave if the member would care to apologize for the following statement. He stated: They did not put anyone at risk. These are the individuals that blocked the operation of the Portage Diversion for 12 hours. The ice was already gone from the lower Assiniboine.

Will he and will the Leader of the Opposition take accountability for the fact they put three RMs at risk? They also threatened the city of Winnipeg. Will they stand up—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

I'm sure all members in the House recall just a short time ago I took a matter under advisement. In fact, it was a matter of privilege that was raised here and it was dealing with the subject matter to which the minister was just responding a moment ago. I'd like to caution the honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, please afford me the opportunity to bring back a ruling for the House on this particular matter and do not reference it. And it's my caution to all honourable members, please do not reference that in any of the questions or answers that you're posing to the House until a ruling has been provided to the House.

Mr. Ashton: Just on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I just want to indicate that quote, actually, was after the matter of privilege was raised, after question period, and certainly I—

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

Again, I'd like to caution all honourable members that even if it's a reference to someone else's comments and it's still in relationship to the point of order that I've taken under advisement or a matter of privilege under advisement, I caution honourable members, please do not use that, even if it's someone else's words, because I would like to have the opportunity to bring back a ruling for the House.

So I'm not sure if the minister has concluded his response. He has only a few seconds left.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say it again that, as we deal again with a very significant flood situation, one of the other things I would expect members opposite, including that member, is to stand up for the investments that are going to be necessary to protect the people of Lake Manitoba, the people of Lake St. Martin, because you know, if you take out \$500 million, which is what members opposite would do in terms of the public finances,

including drastic cuts, you can't do it. It's only members on this side are going to be able to provide the flood protection that those communities need.

PST Increase Government Presence at Rally

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Well, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty obvious the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux) is going to have his truck idling at the back door there at quitting time today for the members from Dauphin, Gimli, St. James, Interlake, Maples, Selkirk. That truck's getting pretty full.

I would like to ask the member for Swan River (Mr. Kostyshyn): Is there room in that truck for him, or is he going to walk out the front door and talk to those people who are here for the rally tonight?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Well, Mr. Speaker, I know one thing the member for Dawson Trail will be doing is he'll be letting his constituents know that one of the consequences of our inability not to operate the Portage Diversion would have been the need for even further operation of the Red River Floodway which would've created flooding in his area.

And I want to put on the record once again, Mr. Speaker, that one of the biggest differences between us on this side of the House and them when it comes to floods, in 1997—and I realize, by the way, the Leader of the Opposition had quit as Emergency Measures Minister and had left provincial politics—but in 1997 the premier of the day blamed flood victims. We've invested a billion dollars in protecting them and we will invest significant amounts of money in the future with this budget and with the leadership of this government.

PST Increase Government Presence at Rally

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon so many of those members opposite remain in their seats while they're supposed to get up and stand up for their constituents, and while the member for Thompson puts so many words on the record, he is still silent on the NDP record of overspending, the NDP record of mismanagement that puts Manitobans at risk in the future.

And as the members for Dauphin and Dawson Trail and Gimli and St. James and the Interlake and The Maples and Selkirk and Swan River will not have the courage to stand up to their constituents, I want to ask the member for Fort Garry-Riverview

(Mr. Allum) a very simple question: Will he stand up with his constituents at tonight's rally and oppose the NDPST increase?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I'm—*[interjection]*—yes, loads of time. Winkler-Morden, right? I'm pleased to have a question from the member from Winkler-Morden.

One of the first things that I did after the last election campaign was I had the opportunity to join him when we opened the new school. In fact, the Premier was there too, and we opened the new school in his riding, Mr. Speaker.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, I just got a letter from the Garden Valley School Division asking me if I'd be available to attend the opening of their next new school in the fall, and I know he'll be there to join us because we're investing in education.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

PST Increase Government Presence at Rally

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, during the last election those members opposite showed a lot of courage going to doors and saying they wouldn't raise taxes, but now Manitobans are coming to our door, the door of the Legislature, at 6 o'clock and we know which members don't have the courage to come: the members for Kirkfield Park, for Assiniboia, for St. Norbert, for Radisson, for Southdale, for Riel, for Seine River, Fort Richmond, Rossmere, Dauphin, Dawson Trail, Gimli, St. James, the Interlake, The Maples, Selkirk, Swan River, Fort Garry and St. Vital.

So I'm going to ask the leader of that party: Is the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) going to show some courage, come to the front door of the Legislature, even poke your head out the window, show some courage, don't slither out the back door?

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

* (14:40)

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I'm glad to see they're putting their caucus time to such good use over there getting their practice in. It's a very, very well-orchestrated response.

Mr. Speaker, we stand with Manitobans every day. We stand with them to make sure that we have

the resources to hire nurses, to build personal care homes, to hire teachers, to build daycare centres, to build schools. We stand with Manitobans on the needs that they have told us they have, and we make those choices even when they're difficult.

We don't make the choices that members opposite are now running so hard and fast away from, the choices they outlined just a couple of weeks ago that would result in thousands of Manitobans losing their jobs. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we have made a better choice.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Yesterday evening I was pleased to attend the YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards Gala Dinner. Along with the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister), his wife Esther and several of our other colleagues, we were proud to attend the event and honour these incredible women and the contributions they have made to our society.

As a bronze sponsor of the event, the Manitoba Progressive Conservative caucus is committed to seeing women succeed and to recognizing their accomplishments. Eighty-six women were honoured last night, and of those, 14 received awards in 12 respective categories.

Those women honoured with awards were: Rhonda James for culture; Diane Gray for leadership and management; Melissa Kajpust, Lisa Meeches and Ursula Lawson of NCI New Voices for the Circle of Inspiration Award; Judith Bartlett for education, training and mentorship; Melanie Verhaeghe for public awareness and communications; Juliette Cooper for science, technology and the environment; Randi Gage for volunteerism, advocacy and community enhancement; Maureen Orchard for wellness, healthy living and recreation; Emily Richard as the Young Woman of Distinction; Wendy Yushi Wang who was honoured with the Gerrie Hammond Memorial Award of Promise; Lynette Ens who was honoured with the Prairie Award of Promise.

And I am particularly pleased to congratulate Helen Granger Young in the arts category. As founder of the Nellie McClung Foundation, I had the privilege of working with Helen as she designed and created the Nellie McClung monument on the

grounds of our Legislative Building. Helen was amazing to work with, and we can all see for ourselves the stunning outcome as well as historical significance of her work.

Once again, I would like to congratulate the winners and all of those who were nominated for a 2013 Women of Distinction Award.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend a group of amazing women who are using their vision, compassion and unique talents to create a positive change in Manitoba.

Last night, I and some of my colleagues had the pleasure of attending the 37th annual YMCA-YWCA Women of Distinction awards. These awards are a celebration of the achievements of women who have done some amazing work in their communities. This year, 86 women were recognized for their contribution to their respective fields.

Every year, I am astounded by the calibre of nominees, Mr. Speaker, and this year was no different. This diverse group of women are involved in the performing arts, in education, in non-profits, in small businesses, in research and much more.

All of the nominees deserve recognition, Mr. Speaker, and I am proud to say that two of them come from Kirkfield Park.

Edith Turner, a member of the Winnipeg Police Service for over 19 years, was instrumental in encouraging the Winnipeg Police Service to become a partner in the We are all Treaty People campaign. She was the first Canadian female police officer to work in an undercover operation in an Ontario prison. She is also a single mom who works with initiatives aimed at empowering Aboriginal youth.

And today in the gallery, we have Jennifer Niblett, an International Baccalaureate student at Westwood Collegiate, who's a dedicated musician and a keen athlete who shares her passion with others through coaching, teaching music lessons and contributing her talents to Westwood's band and basketball programs. She also volunteers her time at summer camps for young people and fundraisers for Growing Opportunities International.

Mr. Speaker, there were many incredible women present last night, and I would like to acknowledge the 13 who were selected from this amazing group as this year's Women of Distinction: Helen Granger

Young, Rhonda James, Diane Gray, Judith Bartlett, Melanie Verhaeghe, Juliette Cooper, Maureen Orchard, Emily Richard, Wendy Yushi Wang, Lynette Ens, Melissa Kajpust, Lisa Meeches and Ursula Lawson.

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to congratulate all the 2013 Women of Distinction winners and nominees. You truly make Manitoba proud.

Thank you.

Morden Elks Lodge 50th Anniversary

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Morden Elks Lodge their 50th anniversary.

In 1963, a group of community builders came together and established this fraternal organization to serve an area including Morden and Thornhill. For 50 years, the Morden Elks have built a legacy in the Morden area, supporting local initiatives and programs helping children, seniors and families.

The Morden Elks are a staple of the Morden Corn and Apple Festival for their famous beef on the bun and their giant Elks barbeque. They maintained an outdoor arena for many years, and today the Elks' tennis courts and playground structure stand on that same site.

The lodge has been committed to children's causes, raising funds necessary to purchase, first, a mobile hearing detection booth and, later, a fetal heart monitor for Boundary Trails Health Centre.

Lions Manor on North Railway Street is a 55-plus apartment block in the heart of the downtown, providing a home to many Morden seniors.

Last summer the lodge pledged three years and \$10,000 per year to the new Tabor Home personal care home through proceeds raised from their annual Lobsterfest fundraiser in Thornhill.

Last Saturday, it was my privilege to join lodge members, their spouses and special guests for a dinner and celebration in what is, undoubtedly, a first. The current exalted ruler, Herman Bollenbach, was also the exalted ruler when the lodge was first established exactly this week back in 1963.

The Elks Lodge boasts over 90 members strong, many of whom are younger members, ensuring that the good work of the lodge will go on.

And the lodge took time to recognize eight charter members who were there at the founding and continue to be active in the lodge. And it is my pleasure to congratulate those individuals: Herman Bollenbach, Howie Sager, Gordon Sager, Don Sager, Lorne Kyle, Glen Hunt, Haze Shore and Archie Miller.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Asian Heritage Month

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is proud of its multiculturalism and social diversity. On behalf of the Manitoba government, I'm honoured to have the opportunity today to rise and recognize May as Asian Heritage Month. We acknowledge the extensive and rich history of Asian Canadians and appreciate their contributions to both our country and province.

Over the last two centuries, Asiatic immigrants have journeyed to Canada from all over the world, bringing vibrant cultural heritage, languages and traditions with them. Manitoba has welcomed newcomers from 150 countries, and Asian nations currently top the list with the Philippines, India and China being the most prevalent countries of origin.

These new Manitobans drive our province's economic and social growth and contribute to every aspect of society: in the arts, science, business, in government and sports. They have helped make Manitoba into the culturally diverse, compassionate and prosperous province that we are fortunate to be a part of today.

Everyone should get a chance to discover these cultures and I highly recommend taking in Folklorama and its superb Asian pavilions. What a great opportunity to experience a variety of ethnic dances, music, cultural display and food. Thank you to all the Asian cultural organizations in Manitoba and to Folklorama for bringing these groups together once a year in the largest and longest running festival of its kind in the world. Manitoba is undoubtedly the cultural capital of Canada.

In the weeks ahead, numerous events will take place across the country to celebrate Asian Heritage Month. I invite all Manitobans to take part in the festivities across the province, whether it's writing workshops, the screening of short films or the music and dance concerts—there's something for everyone. The annual festival at The Forks is a definite highlight.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that Asian immigrants keep selecting our province as their destination of choice, that all Manitobans will continue to appreciate the contributions that these new Canadians. Just as they have helped shape our history, identity and society, Manitobans of Asian descent will continue to help drive our collective story forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Further statements—oh, sorry.

Big Brothers and Big Sisters 100th Anniversary

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): We're all aware of the importance of supporting young people to help them achieve their full potential, and this year, Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Canada is marking its 100th anniversary of making a positive difference in the lives of children and youth through its range of mentorship programs.

Big Brothers-Big Sisters matches young people with mentors in a one-on-one or group context, both in school and outside of school. Serving as role models, mentors provide friendship, support and guidance and teach the importance of staying in school and of having respect for family, peers and community.

The Big Brothers and Big Sisters movement came to Winnipeg in 1969 and 1970, and, since then, the program has been creating life-changing relationships to help children and youth reach their full potential.

Young people who are mentored are more likely to feel confident in their abilities and to stay in school, and are less likely to bully, fight, lie or suffer anxiety due to peer pressure.

Big Brothers-Big Sisters Canada is celebrating this milestone birthday with a public education campaign on the value of youth mentoring to our communities and to our society.

The Winnipeg branch of the movement celebrated the kickoff of the centennial in March with the RBC Bowl for Kids Sake event, and more events will be happening through the year to raise awareness as well as funds to support their important work.

It is crucial that we invest in our children's futures and Big Brothers-Big Sisters volunteers do just this. The volunteers who donate their time mentoring with Big Brothers-Big Sisters are

reaffirming to these children that they are valued and worthwhile. In the process, they demonstrate tolerance and acceptance, an attitude that all of our young people should be encouraged to develop and one best learned by example.

* (14:50)

I ask all members to join me in celebrating this important organization and the difference it makes in the lives of young people in Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

GRIEVANCES

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to grieve that day after day after day in this session I have stood in this House and read petitions from the community of St. Jean Baptiste regarding the loss of their bridge. For the last three days, I've done private members' statements from the time of the inception of the bridge until the implosion of the bridge.

This community was built along the Red River; houses were built, businesses were constructed on both sides of the river. The community first settled in 1869, first built a ferry to access both sides of the river in 1876. The first permanent bridge—excuse me, was constructed and opened in 1948 and the community kept growing and expanding. The Mennonites settled on the east side of the river, and a partnership was formed through agriculture and trade that last 'til today. Businesses flourished in St. Jean; they were established and served both sides of the river. And the need to do that helped them survive. A fertilizer dealership, an equipment dealership, an aggregate trucking business, a grain business, a pulse company specializing in edible beans which has now expanded to an international company, all have set up shop in St. Jean. LPR trucking, who have built a successful business hauling grain provincially and internationally on both sides of the river, also established there, Mr. Speaker.

Floods have dominated that area since before the bridge was built and well after. The community would close the dikes, have concrete dividers placed on the bridge attempting to save it from—at all costs. They knew that the closure was temporary and soon enough they could cross the river again. Flooding became a fact of life in southern Manitoba and adjustment became part of that routine.

In August, MIT inspected the bridge and closed it to do upgrades and repairs with the idea of using it

as a bypass for when they would close the bridge in Morris on Highway 23 for needed repairs. They spent a hundred thousand dollars on reinforcing the bridge and resurfacing the bridge and another \$350,000 resurfacing a mile leading up to the bridge from the east side.

The government closed the bridge. They inspected it and they found that there was shifting taking place, only after all this expense. And they could not keep it open any longer. Mr. Speaker, the piers had moved three inches—three inches—we spent a half a million dollars with a three-inch space on the bridge. Just the expansion and contraction on a bridge that length will move a foot to 18 inches in the summertime. But these engineers didn't look at that. They just spent a half a million dollars and wasted that half a million dollars.

The government—the community waited for a plan of action to be informed of what was going to happen. The government told them, or told the municipality, that the spans would be lifted off the piers and the work would be done, and the spans would be put back and the bridge would be as normal. Unfortunately, the government had other plans.

The community wrote letters, both to me and to the minister. They called me. They called the minister. I gave them all the information I had, Mr. Speaker. And I can say that I met with the special assistant in the minister's office on a weekly, and sometimes twice a week. I met with him to find out what was going to happen with this bridge. Would they meet with the bridge committee? Would they tell the community what was taking place? The minister wouldn't answer. They wanted to ask questions; the minister wouldn't pick up the phone.

The government failed the people of St. Jean in the most basic possible way. They refused to talk to the people that they proposed that they represent. And, as we've seen today, they won't stand up to represent the people today that are coming to the Legislature to ask questions, to ask questions why they were lied to. They were lied to, told that there would be no tax increase. They were told there would be no PST increase. They're coming to ask that very question and we've seen today that there's not one member in this House that's going to go out there and meet with them. They'll scurry out the back door, that's what they're going to do.

But, on February 15th, I was informed that the bridge would be imploded within 48 hours. The

government gave the community the same notice. By February 17th, the bridge was imploded and it laid in pieces on the Red River. The community was crushed and disappointed as this government did not tell them the truth, which seems to be a common practice for them, and refused to do so until it was way too late.

We later found out, after I came and let the minister—the Minister responsible for MIT—I was the one that alerted him to the fact that the bridge was going to be imploded. He said, nonsense. Of course, we've heard that from other people too—nonsense. And so, he said, I will check in to this, and he did and he got back to me and he said, I'm sorry, but my deputy minister doesn't know—my deputy minister doesn't know who authorized that. I said, well, can you get back to me? And, of course, he said he would—yes, he said, he would.

So we later found out that the decision was made by the assistant deputy minister and that the minister had no idea what was happening to the bridge. The minister was not briefed, was not notified, leaving the bureaucrats to run the department. The last time I checked, and I checked again just the other day, the minister is supposed to be the head of that government department. He is the one that's being paid the high dollars to do that job, and he stood up in the House today and gave no answers. Wouldn't show up to talk to the people on the front steps today. No, no, he would stand here and rant and rave about all of the money he has for infrastructure, but he doesn't run his department; he doesn't know where the money's going; he doesn't know if it's buying dynamite or not.

Engineers from the department came out to St. Jean to hold a community meeting, only after I insisted that they had to meet with the community. They explained their rationale after they apologized for not talking to the community. We had 175 people from the community sitting there in disbelief that they would come out and apologize for not talking to them first. And they tried to tell us that the bridge would cost \$50 million to \$60 million. The fact is, Mr. Speaker—the fact is, they have to spend \$20 million to stabilize the bank that has been slipping to hold a 'rin' dike—ring dike up to protect the community. It has nothing to do with the cost of the bridge.

They could have just as easily repaired those piers and set them sections back on. But no, the NDP math went to work, that's what happened. They said,

no, no, it's going to cost \$20 million to fix it—wasn't true. So, they blew it up and now we—going to cost \$50 million to replace it. That's NDP math; that's why they had to raise the PST, is because they don't know how to manage.

The minister had the opportunity that day, Mr. Speaker, to come and talk to the people, and he let them down. He could've come out and said, we would try to repair the damage—he didn't do that. He didn't try to repair the damage that he had created in the community. The minister has now made it quite clear that he doesn't like protests, he doesn't like groups of people and he certainly doesn't like it when they voice their opinions that are different than his.

The people of St. Jean deserve to be heard and the minister just won't listen. He'll respond with empty rhetoric and more broken promises, but the people of St. Jean have had enough lip service. They want a bridge; they want answers.

The NDP likes to talk about record investments. Rather than making a \$20-million investment and fixing that bridge, they blew it up. Mr. Speaker. One of their directors said to the crowd, it will cost a \$100 a car to cross that river if we spend that kind of money. We had another bureaucrat making a decision, but I can tell you that when you did the math, it was \$5.11—that's the type of math that they do. They don't have their facts straight; they don't know how to operate a calculator, for goodness' sake.

An Honourable Member: Can you believe that?

* (15:00)

Mr. Graydon: I can, yes. The government is an avenue with which people can see the change they want in their communities and can demand answers of the people that represent them. The Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton) and his portfolio represents the needs of all Manitobans whether they vote NDP or not. And to avoid talking to a community, to avoid answering questions on a vital piece of infrastructure in a community is just plain wrong.

The NDP is more than happy to raise taxes for all Manitobans, yet they won't listen to any of them. The people of St. Jean have yet to have answers as to when this new bridge will be constructed. The engineers who came out to the community in March didn't have any answers, and the minister hasn't—

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

Any further grievances? Seeing none, we'll move on to—

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): I'd like to ask you to move us into second reading debate on bills 9, 12, 14 and 18, please.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed under orders of the day to move to debate on second readings of bills 9, 12, 14 and 18, starting with Bill 9.

Bill 9—The Teachers' Society Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: And I wish to advise the House that I have received information indicating from the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) indicating that the honourable member for Steinbach has received the unlimited speaking time delegated by the Leader of the Official Opposition on Bill 9.

So the honourable member calling—*[interjection]*

We'll now proceed with Bill 9, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education (Ms. Allan), The Teachers' Society Amendment Act.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I want to assure the House I don't intend to use unlimited time. I will end eventually, Mr. Speaker. Eventually, I'll come—but I do, you know, I do want to put on a number of words on the record because I think it's important.

And, anytime that we have the opportunity to speak about teachers in this House and to applaud teachers for the work that they do in our schools, we want to do that. And we want to do it in a way that ensures that those who are in the education field—and I would include in that, obviously, the teachers in the classroom, but others who work within the school system. We have administrators and, of course, trustees and those who work within the schools to ensure that our schools work well, and that our kids are able to get the—not only the quality of education that they need, but the learning environment that they desire as well. That any time we have that opportunity in the House to be able to speak to that, that we use that opportunity.

So I appreciate the fact that the leader of our party has given me a few extra minutes beyond the 30 minutes that we're normally allocated, because I do think, in fact, Mr. Speaker, that it is very

important to put words on the record in support of our fine teachers.

And I, as a parent of a young boy who is in the education system, I've learned a lot in the last couple of years about the education system. I use—of course, I was in the education system, Mr. Speaker. Members might be surprised by that, but I was once in the education system myself, but you forget a lot of things and, of course, a lot of things change.

I had the opportunity to—in elementary, go to Elmdale School in Steinbach. I revisited it just a little while ago to talk to some of the teachers. I was delivering some books there for I Love to Read Month, and the school looks remarkably the same. I was surprised that after all of these years, Mr. Speaker, that not much had actually changed within the school. So it brought back a lot of fond memories for me going through the halls. But a lot of things change, of course, over the time since I was in elementary at Elmdale School in Steinbach. And, now as a parent, I get to sort of view it from the other side and to see how kids are doing and what they're doing in school now.

And I want to, you know, as an early comment, say how much I appreciate the teachers in Woodlawn School and Southwood elementary School in Steinbach. My son has wonderful teachers and we've had nothing but good experience. I remember the first day that he went to school, Mr. Speaker, we—my wife and I—we dropped him off at elementary and, you know, I think all of us who've gone through this experience—I know it be true—it will be true for the Government House Leader (Ms. Howard) as well, in the future. When you drop your child off for that first day of formal education—he'd been in daycare before—but you don't know how, not only how your child is going to respond, but you don't always know how you, as parents, are going to respond. That's almost as difficult, and for my wife, her greatest fear was that my son would have—would sort of go in and sort of forget about—of her, and my greatest fear was that he would have difficulty going to school.

And when we got there, and we went together—we had that opportunity; we weren't sitting at the time—and he ran to his teacher and then he turned around and he ran back towards us and he just gave us both a hug and said, you know, I'm going to school.

He was so proud and he ran inside, and I looked over at my wife and—I hope she forgives me for saying it—but she was just in tears. I mean she was

so happy that this was working out well, and I was so happy, of course, that he was going to be well-adjusted and it wasn't going to be difficult for him on the first day of school. And that doesn't mean that every day is smooth days, you know, with young children. There's certainly ups and downs, Mr. Speaker, within the system.

I did have a chance to visit his school for a celebration of learning about two or three weeks ago, and it was interesting. I mentioned to you, Mr. Speaker, how I attended Elmdale School when I was a young person and, you know, what you'd expect the schools to be in the 1970s or, you know, the chalkboards and the chalk and sort of the dust that goes around the school.

In fact, at that time, it was interesting because they were going to an open classroom type of model, and I know different sorts of—I wouldn't want to call them fads but different sorts of things in the education system sort of come and go, and you test different things that you think might work and not work, Mr. Speaker. So I know that at that time, when I was at the Elmdale School, they were going to an open classroom classes, so they had a very large room and then they had divided the room up into different classes but with—just with chalkboards so they weren't actually stationary walls.

And, even as a young person, I thought, well, this isn't going to work very well because you could sort of see other classes underneath those chalkboards. You know, it was quite distracting as a young person, and there were some other kids—I, of course, wouldn't participate in this sort of thing, but sort of sliding things underneath the chalkboards into the different classrooms. And I think that that only lasted for a few years, and so they sort of went away from that because it wasn't the right sort of thing.

But, when I went to visit my son's school for the celebration of learning, it was remarkable to see how things had changed and, of course, I mean all of us who have kids who are younger we're always surprised at how well they adapt and how quickly they adapt to technology. My own son, you know, if he's on the computer—and he's only—you know, he's only 6 and a half, almost 7, but on the computer and how quickly he can move around that and iPads and those sort of devices that sometimes come within their realms, we're surprised at how fast they adapt to technology.

I'm always surprised at that because, you know, we relate back to our own time. We relate back to

our own time as young people, and we didn't have that, and so we're surprised how fast, Mr. Speaker, they pick these things up.

So, when I went to his classroom, Mr. Speaker, I saw they had—I can't even remember what it was called but they don't have the chalkboards any more. They have the—

An Honourable Member: Whiteboards.

Mr. Goertzen: My colleague from Pembina—

An Honourable Member: Morden-Winkler.

Mr. Goertzen: Or from Morden-Winkler—now I'm repeating the mistakes of the Minister for Education (Ms. Allan), you know, from—my colleague from the great constituency, the second greatest constituency in Manitoba, from Morden-Winkler, Mr. Speaker—*[interjection]* Of course, they're all great constituencies, but I know that he's a former teacher and so he's got a lot of experience in this, and he was saying that they're called whiteboards.

And so they've got the whiteboards but then they have a projector that goes onto the whiteboard, and it looks like a sort of a computer screen on the board and then—*[interjection]* What's that? Oh, the minister wants me to describe pencils, and she probably went to school at the same time I did, judging by that because they didn't have pencils. I mean what they actually had were these computerized—

An Honourable Member: Oh, Smart Boards.

Mr. Goertzen: Smart Boards. There we go. Now I've got it. The member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen) says they were Smart Boards, and you touch on those boards actually, Mr. Speaker, and it's like a computer screen on the whiteboard. And so it was surprising to me how much it changed, and my son, you know, he was very proud to show this off and wanted me to see exactly how they did this. And I think it was called a meme or something along those lines, but now I'm getting different opinions. It might not have been that, but I think it was something along those lines.

But he—

An Honourable Member: That's a mime.

Mr. Goertzen: Not a mime. No, mime is something completely different, you know, but I could mime things, but they—it was ultimately a very interesting experience for me, how different the classroom was. And so, when we talk about education in Bill 9 and the Teachers' Society and how teachers interact with

classrooms and how they interact with students, Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see the different challenges—sometimes challenges but sometimes advantages—that today's teachers have.

* (15:10)

And my son took me around to the rest of the school because that was part of what he was supposed to do. We went to the library and saw all the different books, and, of course, the electronics are very different within the library where they have the standard books, but they have many electronic versions of books as well. So he was quite proud to show that off. And we went to the gym, and it's probably a bit smaller than it should be, and the gym, just to paint a bit of a picture for you, Mr. Speaker, there's—surrounded by flags in the gym of all the different nations that are represented by children who were born in those countries. Of course, members will know that Steinbach is quite a multicultural community. I think sometimes, and I've said in the House before, that the reputation of Steinbach is, I think, probably 10 years behind what the reality is.

So, in the school, Mr. Speaker, they have the flags of all the different nations from when the—from where the children have come from. And I think that's a wonderful way to welcome people who've come from different countries and to show them how important it is that they're there and that they're making a contribution, that they're making our province more successful.

So from the gym we then went on to some of the other rooms that they have within the school, and it was just a remarkable thing, and I really enjoyed the opportunity. And I want to say that, as a father now, how much I appreciate the work that our teachers do and those who are within the education system because they take a lot of, in some ways, stress off of us as parents. Because I know that, as a parent, you often wonder, I mean, when you're used to, for the first five years, having your child not in the formal education system—often they're in daycare and that sort of thing, but they're more closely connected to the home during the daytime hours, that when they go on to the education system, well, you worry about them. I mean, that's a natural sort of thing and I think it's not unusual to worry about your kids.

And so, when you find out and you get the opportunity to go into the schools and to talk to the teachers, that really it's such a wonderful thing for them and such a wonderful place. It takes a lot of stress off you as parents. And, you know, we work

long days, sometimes, here in the Legislature, Mr. Speaker. We sometimes work many months at a time. We might be working many months at a time now for many months to come. And so to have that ability to know that your son or your daughter is in a place where they—during the day where they not only are doing well, but that they enjoy, because that's a big part of it. You don't want the stress of thinking that your son or daughter isn't enjoying their learning experience.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that that's not the experience for everybody, and that it's not always the same for every parent and it's not the same for every child. And I'm mindful of that. I never want to, sort of, take that sort of thing for granted because I do know that there are kids who struggle and who don't do as well in the school environment. And there are many different reasons why that can happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I mean, I could list off a variety of reasons about why that is. I don't want to get into great detail, but I think it suffices to say that there are many kids who don't do as well within our school environment, and it's important for us, as legislators, to ask those questions about why that is, and, as parents, we want to know and to interact with the teachers. And, ultimately, this bill, of course, is about teachers, and I know that interaction with the teachers that my son has had, both in kindergarten and grade 1, has been very positive.

You know, there's been some challenges I mentioned a little bit earlier on along the way, and so you address those challenges, Mr. Speaker, by going to the teachers and asking them what exactly the different issues are with your son or daughter. And you find out very quickly that those teachers are eager to talk to you. They want to talk to you because they really have the best interests of the kids at heart and they make the time to say that, you know, this is what's working well or this maybe isn't working so well with your son or daughter. And that's very informative, and it's also very comforting because you know that there is somebody who wants to work with you. And I think, sometimes, it really is about a partnership, that it's not just simply dropping off your son or daughter at school, but they're—you need that interaction with the school environment, the learning environment, with the principals and the teachers. And I've just been so impressed that they've been so willing to do that and that there is that willingness to have that interaction as parents, and that discussion.

And that extends beyond teachers, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wouldn't want anybody who is reading these comments in the future to think that it wouldn't be just—that it's just teachers where you have that opportunity to have that interaction.

I've been able to speak to the principal of my son's school on a number of occasions and, I mean, that's more of an administrative role I understand, Mr. Speaker, more of an ability to run the school and not always be in the classroom maybe as much as you want. And I, you know, I often talk to principals who say they miss being in the classroom, that they wish they could, you know, return to the classroom because that's really where their heart is.

And I see the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), he's agreeing with me. I appreciate that support from him because we know that those principals who leave the classroom, they leave the classroom but their heart still remains there.

And so I've been very impressed when I've gone and spoken with the principal at my son's school about a variety of things that are going on in the school, how engaged he is and how engaged she is, both the principal and the vice-principal, in the whole system and in the whole school. And how desirous they are of ensuring that there is a learning environment that is going to be strong, that's going to be strong not, of course, just for my son but for all the kids who are there.

And there are challenges, Mr. Speaker. And teachers, as this bill would reference, you know they need to face those challenges because in a school like my son's, there are children who are coming from many different countries who have many different backgrounds, who have many different experiences. And when they bring those experiences and when they bring that background, they don't always mesh. I mean, that's understandable. I mean there's language barriers, there's cultural differences, and it often takes a little bit of time for those students to feel a part of their new home, whether it's a community and to feel a part of their school, Mr. Acting Speaker.

And so that's an extra burden that's placed upon teachers and administration, but I would, you know, I use the word burden but I doubt they'd classify it as that, Mr. Speaker. I think they'd look at it as a challenge. They'd look at it as something that's important to take on, something that's—that they wouldn't want to shy away from, that they wouldn't want to shirk away from.

So I have great admiration for those who go into the administration side of the education system and how they interact, Mr. Speaker, with the students that they continue to have that heart for the students, even though their duties have increased and the work that they have to do has increased as well.

And, of course, you know, there are many other different people within the school system, the EAs, the different assistants that come together to ensure that the teachers are being supported. Parents themselves, you know, my wife volunteers in the classroom. She volunteers once a month I think she does, which is, I mean, I applaud for doing that; I should probably do that myself, Mr. Speaker. My schedule's maybe not as predictable.

But it would be something I think that would be valuable for all of us as parents but—my wife often says when she comes back from volunteering just how impressed she is by the different support systems that come around within the education system. She's referenced the EAs at different times. At one time I think she even thought about being an EA herself so she might have sort of a heart for that. She's in another occupation right now, Mr. Speaker, but you never know. There might be a time when she'll look at becoming an EA as well.

But she often talks about how important those EAs are to the education system because they come around the teachers and they really are that support. And, you know, despite what the government sometimes like to say, there are some pretty large classrooms with a lot of kids out there who—when you have 25 or 30 kids in a class, that can be a challenge. Because often teachers will tell me, in fact, Mr. Speaker, it's not always the class size that's the issue; the teacher sometimes tell me it's composition and that's more of the issue that they sort of gravitate around.

But, regardless of whatever the situation is, Mr. Speaker, you do need to have EAs and others who come around. I know as well just to keep a school running, because in many ways a school is sort of a microcosm of a community, you need to have other support, janitorial services and others who get involved.

I remember when I was a young person, Mr. Speaker; we had a special janitor who would make little toys out of thread spools. And I—hard to even describe it, you know, to—but to—to hear, but maybe the Minister of Finance, I don't know if you've ever seen this before but it's like a—it's a thread spool and

then they put rubber bands around and it becomes like a little vehicle. And you know, as a young person I'd—and then, not that I was deprived of toys, you know, but this was something that I thought that was pretty special and so even people who aren't teachers or EAs, I mean, they become really part of the school and really become part of the community within that school, and so I don't want to leave them out either, because they play a real special role.

*(15:20)

Now, my son isn't part of the busing system because we're close enough to the school that he would neither qualify nor would it be necessary, but I certainly know those—and in a rural area this is particularly true, and I'm sure it's probably true in Winnipeg too because the schools aren't always placed in such a way that it makes sense for those to be able to walk. So you have to have that busing service, Mr. Acting Speaker.

But I did many years when I was a young person. I would travel on the bus. We didn't live far outside of Steinbach, but far enough that you needed to take the bus service and that was kind of, especially when you were young, that was kind of a special sort of thing. And even those bus drivers, both men and women who were driving the bus had a real special place in terms of making that overall school experience at the beginning of the day and the end of the day, making it very valuable. And so I don't want to leave them out either because they play such a special role in that.

And of course, there's many volunteers. I would never want to forget the volunteers who come into our school to do so many other things that teachers aren't able to do in their day or that maybe fall outside the normal routine of the education system. Now, it's always dangerous when you list things off, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you'll know this.

But I feel I should take a shot at listing some off: coaches. We know that those who come into our school system, often they come in as coaches to coach a variety of different sports, and that's an important activity. Being a—having athletic ability and having the ability to participate in sports, I think, is something that adds to the school environment. It certainly adds to the school spirit.

I know my friend, the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) is very involved in sporting activities, and I know his kids have been involved in school activities. He talks about it endlessly. And so the

pride extends not only to the students who are on the team but, of course, it extends to the parents. And it really is, I think, a bonding thing for schools to be able to have that spirit around a sports team. And often schools are known more by the sports teams, for those who don't have kids who are going to the schools, than by any other thing because they see the different teams that are playing against each other.

And you know, we saw even within our own community—doesn't relate to schools specifically, but it's going back to the sporting analogy—how a sports team can bring a community together. And we saw that with the Steinbach Pistons who won the Manitoba Junior Hockey League.

I see my friend from Selkirk. I'm sure he cheers on the Steelers. It wasn't maybe their best year, but he cheers them on, and the community sort of comes together. And I think that that's important that you have that happen. But you know, it doesn't happen without volunteers. It doesn't happen without volunteers in the school. And so I want to ensure that, in my brief comments, that I don't leave out the volunteers who are in the schools for those sports teams.

But there are volunteers for other things. You know, we have a lot of fundraisers that happen within the schools because there are so many different extracurricular activities. And this actually surprised me when my son started to go to elementary, just how many fundraisers there were.

And you know, you see the traditional ones of the selling of the chocolate bars and the selling of the almonds and that sort of thing. And then there are others that are not so traditional, selling video cards and selling the gift certificates for grocery stores and those sort of things.

But all of those fundraisers rely on volunteers. I mean, they rely either on the students going out and doing the fundraising for the schools. Or they rely on the parents or other volunteers within the close connections of the family. So they are volunteers in their own way, volunteering to raise funds. And the funds come from different, or go for different reasons. Often there are trips to different places. Band trips, I can think of, or different educational trips that kids will take. I never 'dafforded' or never took—

An Honourable Member: There are kids going to Africa.

Mr. Goertzen: Never took—well, and the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) mentions that some kids are going to Africa.

And that's a great—you know, that's a great experience. I—it's not something I either did or I don't remember if even if I had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, when I was a young person, but I think that's wonderful. I think it's wonderful that that opportunity is there.

But it doesn't happen without volunteers, because you've got to raise that money to ensure that the kids can go. You've got to ensure that there are chaperones, that people who can go with them. All these trips, they cost money. So I mean, it's a lifetime of experiences, and certainly I know that children will benefit from it for many, many years, but ultimately Mr. Speaker, it doesn't happen without volunteers who are willing to go into the schools and to do this sort of important work.

Then, of course, we have librarians who are within the schools, and we should never forget librarians because I know they are often teachers themselves but then they go into a different stream, but they're—they really are, because the library—it was described to me at the one of the elementaries that a library often becomes the crossroads of a school, that it's often sort of the centre hub of a school.

During I Love to Read Month in February, I had the opportunity to visit every elementary school in my constituency. I contacted them and they—I asked them what sort of books they might want for their school library for I Love to Read Month. And, you know, I was surprised how diverse the list was when I got it back. It was quite a list of books that the schools were looking for. So it was a bit of a hide-and-peek, almost, in some ways, trying to find these books, going onto Chapters online or going into the stores, or in one case, we had to get one shipped to a post office in Pembina. But I enjoyed doing it because I thought it was great that the schools had these specific books that they wanted in their libraries.

So I got a chance to visit each of the schools and make a book presentation. Often they had their own sort of events going on for I Love to Read Month. I remember the Blumenort School and the librarian there, Ruth Lees, who does a great job as the librarian. She was a teacher in the classroom for many years and then decided to become the librarian

at Blumenort School. And they had an assembly that was going on, and they had on the video screen an electronic book that was being played on the video screen. And, after that, I had the opportunity, together with the principal, to make a presentation before the assembly of the couple of books, and I really appreciated that opportunity to do that and to visit the school and to see the great work that Ruth Lees was doing, and it gave me a new appreciation for how central and how important it is that we have these strong library resources, and, of course, as I mentioned before, how much libraries have changed over the years.

I also had the opportunity to present, you know, personally, some books at Woodlawn School and at Southwood School, at Elmdale School in Steinbach, in Kleefeld, at the Kleefeld School and at the Mitchell school. I don't want to forget anybody, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I had the opportunity to interact with a lot of kids and a lot of teachers, and this bill, of course, is about teachers, and so I learned a lot when I was talking to the teachers and the importance of the libraries and of reading and of ensuring that our kids, particularly at those early ages, get off to the kind of start that we'd like them to.

I've now, in the last couple of years—and I don't get to do it as often as I'd like to, but I do get a chance once in a while to do the reading assignments with my son—and I've really been, you know, surprised, not because I didn't think he had the capability, but I'm surprised how quickly kids pick up the reading. And so, over the last year my son has—*[interjection]* Well, I—and I appreciate the offer of more water from the member from Elmwood. That's very generous of him to offer that and it's—*[interjection]* Now, I don't want to get into a partisan debate as somebody—I think I heard somebody say it's the second anniversary of him losing his federal seat, but I'm sure that's not true, and I wouldn't want to divert into that kind of partisan debate.

So, you know, because I was trying to be quite sincere about this and about the importance of the education system, so I don't want to get too diverted from that, but I've been really amazed at how much a year changes a young person. That one year is quite remarkable in watching my own son and how much he's learned in terms of reading and how it opens up the world for him, really. It really does open up the world. We'll be—now, of course, we're driving along at different places and he's reading the signs and he's reading different things, and I'm always surprised at

what he's able to read. And so, you know, it's both fascinating, but, as a parent, of course, it's a great source of pride. But I don't, you know, want to, before I go into other comments, I don't want to not mention the work that the teachers and librarians do because they're such an important part of that in ensuring that those great things happen. We also know that it—there's many within the community itself, the community as a whole, that ensure that our schools are working well, that our teachers are able to do the sort of work and the quality of work that Bill 9 would expect them to do, Mr. Speaker.

*(15:30)

We know that those who are in the public work system and they work hard to ensure that kids can get to school. This has been one of those years where it's been difficult because of the weather really, and I don't remember so many snow days in a school year as there has been this year. The weather's been quite something in terms of playing disruption with the school schedule, and so, you know, you rely greatly on those in the public works system to ensure that you can get your kids to school whether that's in a city like Steinbach, and they do wonderful work I want to say, Mr. Speaker, on the record that the city of Steinbach is I think the—second to none in terms of their public works system and clearing the roads. I know that—*[interjection]*—well, and, of course, I know Morden-Winkler does quite well too.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that the government cut the snow-clearing budget in the last year, and I wonder how that impacted schools—just got me thinking as I was speaking that that cut, that reduction, of snow clearing it could've had an impact, in fact, on the ability of kids to get to school, and it's hard to obviously to judge that just specifically without having any sort of specific data but I think we've always got to be conscious of the fact that we somehow got to get our kids to school those who are using the busing system, and so we want to be thankful for those who are out in the community and assuring that that happens.

An Honourable Member: Right after librarians those bus drivers are most important.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, you know, my colleague from Arthur-Virden says that right after the librarians, the bus drivers or the snow clearers are the next important, and I wouldn't want to rank them, you know. I think if I was ranking them it would be like, you know, 1A, 1B, 1C because they're all so important within the overall system. I can't imagine

what a school would be like if you took out the janitorial service, for example, well, it couldn't function. If you took out the volunteers, well, what would a school be like? I mean, it simply couldn't function. If you took out the librarians it wouldn't be the same school, Mr. Speaker. You wouldn't have the same sort of environment, and, of course, if you took out the administration, if you took out the teachers it wouldn't be the same as well. So, you know, all of them they really work together to ensure that there's a quality education system, and that they're working hard to ensure that our kids aren't just doing well academically. That is important, of course, and that is a core function of schools.

But they're doing well in other ways as well, and I would challenge all of us as parents, and I look at myself specifically to be engaged in the school system, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that you're checking in, that you're asking teachers about how your kids are doing, to be engaged in the learning process, because it is so important that we as parents don't forget that we remain a critical part of that system, even though we aren't always there during the educational hours. And so I think that that's, you know, a critical thing to remember.

I want to talk specifically, Mr. Speaker, about certain portions of the legislation. I know—and I had the opportunity to speak to the minister. We had a briefing not too long ago. I can't remember when it was. And I, you know, I've got a lot of comments that I want to put on the record about the bill because we haven't sat for a long time. We went, I think, 10 months and only sat 10 days, which isn't a long time, and I know the public would sometimes shake their head at that and we'd probably shake our head with them because knowing that the government doesn't want to be here in the Legislature. So I've got a lot of built-up comments on Bill 9 that I have been waiting for, for those 10 days and 10 months that we sit. So I want to be very detailed in the discussion about the bill and the various clauses that me and the minister—we had a bit of a time to talk about it but not an awful lot of time. But now as I move into the substance of the comments that I wanted to make.

So Bill 9, I want to simply read various clauses, Mr. Speaker, and then talk about some of the proposed changes to the bill and some of the reasons for the bill, and so the principles regarding the section 2 of the bill, the reasons why it is going to be changed, and this portion of the bill ensures that the Manitoba Teachers' Society, by a bylaw to allow them to establish standards of professional conduct—

for example, it was outlined in the code of professional conduct that also allows the society, through professional conduct committee and review committee, to enforce those standards for members deemed to have engaged in unprofessional conduct. Now, those—that's pretty strong language at the end there, when you talk about engaging in unprofessional conduct.

Of course, there are many different occupations that have their own standards and that have their own governing bodies. We can certainly think of the medical profession and the society of physicians and surgeons, and they would have their own professional standards. And, when something happens untoward within their own association, then they go internally first, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the profession is being properly regulated and that there is confidence within the profession—within the medical profession. I know there are a host of different examples that we've seen over the years, unfortunately, where these societies have had to come in and exercise their legislated right to take action on their individual members.

I was reminded by my friend that the dentists' society, I'm told—*[interjection]*—dental association has their own association. I'm not as familiar with their particular regulations, but, obviously, they would have regulations, as well, to ensure that the fine folks who are in the dental community are adhering to certain practices and certain standards that we would have for them as a community.

I know, of course, the legal—the Law Society has their own board and their own jurisdictions over lawyers. And I—they are able to take action on a multitude of fronts, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes, if people feel that lawyers have charged too much money, for example, you are able to bring that to the Law Society and they'll take a look at that, and I've seen many situations where fees are adjusted. I mean—and when I say many, of course, I'm talking in a relative term, because when you look at the hundreds of thousands of different legal cases that might happen over a period of time, only a very, very small percentage would ever end up at the Law Society with any kind of complaint on the fees and how much a particular person was charged for legal service.

So it would be a fairly rare thing when you compare it to the many, many cases, but is an individual raw number, of course, there are—certainly are quite a few.

There are other cases where somebody feels that they haven't been represented well by a lawyer. They can go to the Law Society, Mr. Speaker, and they can lodge a complaint about that. And, again, I would say that it's a very small minority of cases that would ever reach that point, but there are some and that's why you have a professional body like the kind that we have with the Teachers' Society and like the kind that we have with the legal society. And so, those come to mind. I'm not sure if there are others that—but, certainly, the legal society is one that's an 'impor' and one that, probably, the public's most familiar with. And I'm not sure why those would become more prevalent—the legal cases. But, certainly, I know that—but that is one that becomes quite prevalent and becomes quite public, and often they involved some pretty difficult scenarios and difficult situations.

So it's not easy to serve on one of those boards, because you're often a member of that particular community yourself. In fact, that's often a requirement. I think it's true as well for the Manitoba Teachers' Society that you draw from your own. And so to be on a committee like that and to have to, in a way, pass judgment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on members of your own, sort of, professional community—that's not easy; that is a difficult thing to do. I've talked to members who've sat on the Law Society in the past, and they say it's one of the most difficult things for them to do, because, in fact, they are in a way passing judgment on their own. And they know that they're impacting the future livelihood and the future lives of those who are before them.

Now there's often, as there is in Bill 9, a wide range, a spectrum of different punishments or recourses that can happen to somebody who is—goes before discipline. There's a wide range; it's a spectrum. It's not as though every time you go before one of these disciplinary bodies that you automatically lose the right to practise in whatever particular field that body is regulating. That's not the case at all, Mr. Speaker, there is—really is a spectrum. In fact, I would say—and I don't have any empirical evidence with me today, I could probably get some if I'm able to continue speaking on another day—but I would say that it's a very small percentage of people who go before a professional body who are not allowed to continue on in their profession, but there are some. There are always some, and that's why you have this kind of an organization, and that's why you have that kind of regulation. So, when the section of

the bill, ten twelve, the general principle of that particular section is to allow for the professional conduct committee and the review committee to enforce standards for members who are deemed to have engaged in unprofessional conduct.

* (15:40)

And I want to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, before I go on to other portions of the bill and the general principles within the bill, that it's a very, very small—I mean, I don't think that the government has brought this legislation in because they feel that there are hundreds or thousands of teachers who are acting unprofessionally, and if they do feel that way, I'd be sorry to hear that. I don't think that that's the case, though. I certainly know in my interaction with the education community, it's been almost universally positive. Almost universally positive, in terms of dealing with educators and with teachers, just getting some wonderful suggestions and comments from educators, and I just have such a sense of how much they care for their communities and for their classrooms and for their kids. And I've really enjoyed being able to interact more closely with the education community over the last little while and I appreciate that.

So they have now, you know, specific powers in terms of dealing with unprofessional conduct but I would venture that if we were to look back in a couple of years from now on this legislation that we would see this is rarely used. That this had almost never been used, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because our teachers really do act with such great integrity generally within the education system. Now, that doesn't mean that it would never be used. I mean, there's always—you need to have the standards in there, and you need to have regulations to ensure that when something goes afoul that there's a way to take recourse.

But this is, you know, the kind of legislation we often talk about it here in the Legislature, that we often pass legislation hoping that it will never be used. Isn't that true, Mr. Deputy Speaker? When we talk about drinking and driving legislation. It's like buying insurance, in a way, you hope you never have to use it. But I know that with drinking and driving legislation, we introduce legislation and then we pass it and then we hope we never have to use it. We hope it's never actually going to have to be put into effect. I think I was just as critical when we moved legislation here in the Legislature about not being able to benefit or to profit from a crime that you may

have committed. I think it was dubbed the Son of Sam law and that's a longer judicial history than I'll have time to give.

But that is the kind of legislation we pass that we hope we're never going to have to use. It's a fail-safe. You want to make sure that there is something there just in case something happens. So it's not unusual for us to do that here in the Legislature, to bring forward pieces of legislation and then pass them with the hope that it's never actually going to have to be used or never actually going to have to be implemented.

So this is one of those bills I think that I think the minister would agree with me, that we hope that we're never going to have to see teachers who are going to be disciplined because of unprofessional conduct, and I think it's going to be a rare occurrence. I don't think it's going to happen very often.

But I look also further in the bill. There's provisions to make clear that the investigative authority of the society rests with the conduct of active members, not individuals who are inactive members of the society. And I think that that's important that when you want to ensure that those who are being involved in investigations are really part, still, of the system, that they are still engaged actively within the system, that they still understand the context of the community, and they understand the context of the educational system.

Now, not that those who might be inactive within the society, they wouldn't have experience—of course, they'd have experience, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They might be able to bring some good principles to it and, I'm sure, probably an opportunity to lend advice and to ensure that they can give some sage advice to those who are doing the active investigation, but I think all this is intended to ensure is that those who are really participating in the investigation are current members of the society. And so I think that has an important principle as well.

It also, within the bill, it ensures that the professional conduct committee does not make a determination of guilt or innocence; it comes to an opinion that a member has engaged in conduct that ought to result in a formal charge being laid before the review committee. And I think this gets into more of the legalese of the bill, Mr. Speaker, something that we're not passing a judicial sort of ruling about guilt or innocence. And I think it goes

back to the fact that it's more administrative, that individual societies, professional societies, have an administrative right to determine how it is that their professions—professionals within their societies conduct themselves so that when you get into a process where you're trying to review the conduct of an individual, that it isn't necessarily considered guilt or innocence. There is, I know, as well, a provision within the bill that establishes that the standard that is used in determining if somebody within the Manitoba Teachers' Society, under Bill 9, has violated a code of conduct, that the standard that is used is a civil standard. And I want to take a little bit of time just to explain what that means for colleagues and for those who might be reading this in the future.

There are generally two different standards that are used within the legal system. One is the criminal standard, and those who are used to watching movies about criminal issues or TV shows like, you know, CSI and those sort of things, they become used to a certain criminal standard of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, Mr. Speaker, and that's the criminal standard. And often the criminal standard is used when somebody's liberty is at stake, when you are—when you—when the penalty that you could face isn't just a monetary penalty, but where you actually could lose your liberty, where you could do jail time, for example. So it's a higher standard you put in place, a standard of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

That is—that in of itself, has a bit of subjectivity to it, and I know from past studies, when you ask people what guilt beyond a reasonable doubt is, it's hard to define. People might put different percentages on it, they might say, well, I think that, you know, if there's less than a 1 per cent chance that the person didn't do a particular offense, that that would be guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. But it's difficult to apply that because everybody's view of what guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, whether it's a jury system where you have 12 people trying to decide something, is different. Some people might say it's 5 per cent; some people might say it's 3 per cent, that if you thought there was a 3 per cent chance the person didn't do the crime, that you would say that that's proof beyond a reasonable doubt that they, in fact, did the crime. And often it relates to what people's value is to liberty. If you place—the greater value you place to freedom and liberty, often the less chance you're willing to take that you're sending somebody to jail to lose that liberty when they didn't commit the crime. So that's fairly academic, I think, Mr. Speaker, but it's important in

terms of the discussion when you talk about different standards that are placed on different sorts of things.

So, within this legislation, the standard that's been chosen is the civil standard. So, if one was to go to civil court—and usually these involve two private parties, so you have two individuals who have launched a lawsuit against each other so liberty isn't at stake, but often monetary value is at stake—we use the civil standard of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. And that is usually considered—or guilt with a preponderance of the evidence, is something that I think the American term—but often that's considered more likely than not, sort of a 50-50 probability. Is it more likely than not that somebody has done something, and that's the civil standard and that's usually used when there's property that's involved or monetary penalties, because we value—within the justice system and within the standards of systems, we value monetary property and actual physical property less than we value our liberty, our freedom. And so that's why you have those two different standards in place.

So this bill—and I think rightfully so, and I'd be concerned, obviously, if a bill like this, where you're dealing with professional conduct of somebody within a standard, used guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. I think it would be almost impossible, I think, to prove. The burden is so high when you're using that kind of a standard that it would almost give people within that society the feeling that it would be impossible for them to ever have any sort of repercussions against them, and that's not the kind of message we would ever want to leave, Mr. Speaker.

* (15:50)

So the department, I suppose, looked at it and looked at the different standards that they had, and there's different administrative standards. I suspect if you'd look at all the different professions and all the different professional codes, that almost all of them would use the standard of the civil standard, the balance of probabilities, because that's I think what most people would think would be appropriate.

To set the bar so high, to use the standard of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, would be essentially like having no standard at all, I think, Mr. Speaker, within the context of this. Now we do it on the criminal side because the stakes are so high. Not that the stakes aren't important in a situation in a professional body, but the stakes are so high in a criminal case that we've determined within society

that guilt beyond a reasonable doubt is the right standard.

But then again, people have their own subjective right to determine what that is and what percentage that would be. Here, with the civil standard, it makes it clear that it's essentially 50-50. So I'll give you an example, Mr. Speaker. If there is a teacher—I'll just use it because that's the bill we're talking about—who the society believes has done something that would be unprofessional within the different codes of conduct, then the review committee and the investigation would determine if it was more likely than not that in fact they had done this thing and broken the professional conduct. And so it's essentially a 50-50, a balance of probabilities, and I think that that is the right standard to have.

I know there's a provision of the bill, and this has generated in the discussions I have had with educators, with teachers, has generated a degree of controversy, and that's the portion of the bill that indicates that the society—and this is new, Mr. Speaker—I want to indicate some of the bill, and a good portion of the bill, is really putting into place in more definitive terms, I think, powers that the Manitoba Teachers' Society already has.

So they have these broad, general powers. This makes it more specific. In some ways, it might give, you know, the topic of the conversation I think might concern teachers, whenever you have that sort of professional body who has authority over you, but many of these powers already exist. They're just not as specific. So in some ways, I think it can benefit those within the society because they now have very specific and laid-out rules.

But there are—and I know this is generating a great deal of discussion in the Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and so I'm encouraged to go on, but within the bill there is a provision within the bill that says that a cost can be assigned of up to 50—or sorry, \$5,000 if unprofessional conduct is found.

Now, you know, this is an unusual thing within the legal system. Those who've had the either fortunate or unfortunate experience of being in the legal system—it can be fortunate sometimes, if you're on the winning side, if you're able to get something that you're looking for through the legal system, Mr. Speaker. But it can be unfortunate, of course, when you're unsuccessful. Now, costs can often be assigned within the legal system against the party who loses a case, and I think there are a variety of

reasons for this and there's a variety of reasons why this has come up over the years.

One of them would be it's a disincentive. You want to try to disincentivize somebody from bringing a case that really isn't serious or that maybe can be considered to be vexatious, Mr. Speaker. So that's one of the reasons why the court allows you to have costs assigned. The other, of course, is there is a feeling that you want to level the playing field. There are certain people, of course, who have greater means than others in society and who can access the court system and the legal system with that money, and with those means, and then there's others who it's more difficult and there's more of a punishment and more difficult to pay legal fees.

Legal fees aren't cheap and I want to defend my friends at the bar, in the legal bar, who, you know, that there's a lot of costs associated with being a lawyer, lots of filing costs. There's research costs, all sorts of things, Mr. Speaker, that often the general public doesn't see, that cost a lot of money. I think I understand why the public, you sometimes get sticker shock when you see that bottom line of a fee, but there's a lot of costs that come out-of-pocket for lawyers that go to the court and that go to different sorts of things, go to assistants. So there's often reasons for those costs. And so the court will often assign costs to ensure that just not the wealthy have the ability to 'gor' to court, and even if they lose, to punish somebody by dragging them through court, too. And so you now have the ability, and it's been that way for a while, to assign costs.

So this bill in a way mirrors that. This bill is saying that if somebody is found to have unprofessional conduct, Mr. Speaker, that the Law Society can up to \$5,000 attribute the cost of the investigation. Now, there have been some comments among teachers, and generally I have not found a lot of teachers who are—have concerns with the bill overall. But there have been some concerns about whether or not this is necessary. I mean, if the MTS is already under-taking on the investigation, that they're starting the investigation, whether or not they should be able to assign costs.

In fact, the discussion that I had—and we always have to be careful, because we have different jurisdictions here in the Legislature. Of course, we know federally in Parliament they have certain jurisdictions, and those who want to run federally—this has caught the ear of a couple of my colleagues, the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler). If a person is

going to look at the federal Parliament, they have certain rights and then they have certain—a jurisdiction that they are responsible for that our members of Parliament are responsible for, and then there are certain provisions in a provincial level that we as MLAs have responsibility for. And then, of course, there is a civic level as well, Mr. Speaker, and there are certain responsibilities at the civic level. And that division of power is something that is well recognized within our parliamentary and our legal system. So we want to maintain those divisions of powers. We want to make sure that we're respectful of them.

And so you have to make sure that a bill isn't called *ultra vires*, which essentially means that it's not outside of the scope of the Legislature. You want to make sure that it's not outside of the scope—

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

An Honourable Member: Not ultraviolet.

Mr. Goertzen: No, not ultraviolet, *ultra vires*—you want to make sure it's not outside of the scope of the Legislature. So you want to make sure that this particular bill isn't infringing, isn't impeding on the parliamentary rights that they have within Parliament.

And one of the questions that I had, and the questions that we had for the minister was whether the \$5,000 or up to \$5,000 fine was really a fine, that it was more of a punishment as opposed to recouping costs, and whether or not, in fact, Mr. Speaker, within the context of the bill, whether or not you could do that. Can you essentially impose something that's a fine as opposed to something that's just a recouping of costs?

And so that's one of the questions that's come up in relation to Bill 9, Mr. Speaker. And I think we need to have a good discussion about that and ensure that we are on track in terms of whether or not this is something that—going to be beneficial in the long term, and whether or not it's something that's going to be important to maintain.

The bill also says that as a—termination is now being added as a possible disciplinary option available to MTS, there needs to be a provision for allowing reinstatement of a member. So the worst case scenario, and I mentioned before that when you talk about discipline there's really a spectrum. There's a spectrum of—I mean, a person can go through this kind of a regulatory process and they can be found not to have breached the conduct of

standards of teachers. And that would be for the person who is going through the system, that would be the best outcome because that means that they would have no repercussions and they could certainly go back, I think, and continue on their teaching career.

And then, at the end of the spectrum, Mr. Speaker, of course, somebody could lose their ability to teach. They could lose their licence to teach under this legislation. And then in between there there's a whole host of other things that somebody could—or the different sorts of disciplinary action that could happen against somebody who seemed to have breached their professional conduct.

So a variety of different things within that spectrum, and it's always important to remember it's a spectrum. It's not a zero-sum game. It's not either you lose at the professional body and you lose your ability to practice, whether that's as a lawyer or as accountant or as a doctor or as a teacher, or you win, and then you go back into the community and continue on their practice. There's a whole host of other things that can happen in between, Mr. Speaker.

* (16:00)

But we do know that on rare occasions, and we certainly would hope that it would be a rare occasion, there are times when somebody may, in fact, lose their ability to teach. That their professional conduct is so egregious and it's been proven with the civil standard, that that action is taken, that somebody loses their licence to teach.

And, again, I think that that's a very rare thing, I don't think it would happen very often. But you need to be prepared, you need to be able to know that you have those powers in place, Mr. Speaker, to go ahead and do that if you need to. But there are often cases, I think, or there may be cases, where after a certain period of time the society—the Teachers' Society—may want to reinstate somebody.

You know, we're a society that believes in a—second chances and giving somebody another opportunity. I think that's an important thing that we have and, as individuals, we want to ensure that we're appropriate. Somebody who's run afoul of the law or run afoul of something else, has an opportunity to redeem themselves, Mr. Speaker.

We all like a good comeback story, you know, whether it's in sports or whether it's in a movie. And so this is sort of a comeback clause, Mr. Speaker. It

allows an individual who has lost their ability to teach through disciplinary option, it allows them a provision allowing them for possible reinstatement of the member in the future.

And so, it's—I wouldn't call it the faint hope clause—you know, there was a great discussion once federally about the faint hope clause and whether or not that was an appropriate thing for those who've committed very, very serious crimes, Mr. Speaker. And, certainly, the faint hope clause is not something that I think is always appropriate, and it often results in people who are victimized—their families—being revictimized by having to go through another procedure again. So I wouldn't consider this clause to be a faint hope clause, because it doesn't have that same sense of severity.

But it does give hope—it certainly does give hope to somebody who has lost their membership within the teaching society that there is an opportunity in the future to re-get reinstated within the society and continue on a teaching career. So that is important, I think, Mr. Speaker.

Now, there's also a portion of the bill that allows the Manitoba Teachers' Society to file a copy of the review committee's order for costs in the Court of Queen's Bench, at which point it can become a judgment of the court and can be enforced against the member.

Now, I think we're going to have a discussion a little bit in the future, Mr. Speaker, about this kind of a thing in relation to different proceedings—the family proceedings. I think we're going to see private members' legislation that's going to come forward that's going to deal with the assignment of costs and how do you ensure that costs can be enforced, because that's often a situation that's one of the most frustrating within the community, within the legal community, where somebody has been awarded costs in a legal situation and they feel that those costs are coming to them—and I know there are members of the legal community here in the Chamber—and yet you can't collect those costs. The court assigns the costs, but you're not actually able to collect them, and so you have to find a way to ensure that the person who the judgment has come against is actually going to pay up for that particular judgment.

So this particular clause within the bill, within Bill 9, the Manitoba Teachers' Society amendment act, allows somebody—allows the review committee to file an action or file a proceeding within the Court of Queen's Bench, which is the federal court here in—

federally appointed court here in Manitoba, to get that judgment honoured.

And so, I mentioned earlier on that there are questions about whether or not it's actually appropriate to have the \$5,000 fine, if you were, or the \$5,000 recouping of costs, but that's a separate argument that we discussed before. But now, if somebody is in fact going to have that levied against them, there's a mechanism, there's a means to go to court to get that money brought back, Mr. Speaker.

So those are some of the elements of the bill. There are more that I'll talk about yet at a future time, Mr. Speaker, but those are some of the key elements that I wanted to touch on.

Now, I wanted to go through—the Manitoba Teachers' Society has a code of professional practice that they have on their website and I thought it would be instructive and helpful for members of the House to hear, because it relates directly to the bill—to hear what those code of professional and practice conducts are. So I'll try to go through these as quickly as possible so as not to delay proceedings of the House. But I also want to give it proper reading, as well, and not speed through it, Mr. Speaker.

So the first code of professional practice for the Manitoba Teachers' Society is that members' first professional responsibility is to his—is to her or his students. Well, that one I think—you know, it's good that that's No. 1, Mr. Speaker. I think that it's appropriate that the very first—that the very first—code of professional practice that shows up for the Manitoba Teachers' Society is that a member's first professional responsibility is to her or his students, and I don't think, you know, we'd want it any other way. And I know, in talking to teachers—and I'm always encouraged when I talk to teachers—it shines through.

Now, this is kind of legalese, actually—or legalese language. Teachers don't always express it in saying, you know, my first professional conduct is to ensure that the needs of my students or the responsibility of my students is first, but they express it in what they do. They express it in the classroom. When you visit the classroom, when you talk to teachers, when you go to their annual meetings, it becomes clear very quickly that they believe that their first responsibility is to the students. And that can mean a lot of different things, of course—how a teacher interacts with their students, the time that they spend. But that should be the key responsibility.

Just like, I think, for police officers, their—they would probably identify that their first responsibility is to protect the public, to ensure that those law-abiding citizens feel protected.

I think if you would ask doctors or nurses their first responsibility, they'd be quick to say that their first responsibility is to the patient, to the person that they're working with.

In the retail sector, if you were asking business owners, they would say, well, our first responsibility are to our customers. And I had many years when I worked in the retail sector, when I was going through university, Mr. Speaker, and that was always our motto. *We—[interjection]*

Well, my friend from St. Paul wonders how that works for me. You know, I—it was actually some of the best times I've ever had in my life, working at a retail store called Penner Foods. I was just—a quick aside here, Mr. Speaker—and we were taught there, at Penner Foods, owned by my predecessor, Mr. Jim Penner, a fine gentleman, and I often say—I was able to have supper with his widow, Bev Penner, about a week and a half ago, and I was expressing to her that he was one of those individuals that the longer you are away from him, the more you miss him, and I really feel that way about Jim and I really enjoyed working at that store. And one of Jim's mottoes—and as a young person, as a university student—was that the customer's always first, and that's kind of a—you might think that's kind of glib and kind of cliché because a lot of businesses say that, but he put it into practice. There was no doubt about it. When you worked at Penner Foods, you knew that the customers were always first.

And then one of the first lessons that I learned when I started there as a 15- or 16-year-old—I can't remember—but when somebody brings back an item—now most of the items in a grocery store aren't that high value—but when somebody brings back an item, you didn't even ask for a receipt. I mean, now that's common, right? Now, there's a big—you know, on a receipt, there's a big—a return policy on the back of the receipt and you had to follow the letter of the law. That wasn't how it worked at Penner Foods. You know, you'd walk in and say if somebody had a problem with an item, you didn't ask for the receipt. You just took it back and you'd give them something else, because you wanted the customer to go away happy, and so that was a great policy.

And, when I look at the teachers and what they put in their professional practice code with the first

item being a member's first professional responsibility is to her or his students, I am reminded about my experience there. And I think, because it's one thing to say it, you know, you can put that in a code—but I think teachers live it. And I see that when I talk to teachers within my son's school, when I have the opportunity to 'pravel'—travel the province and talk to teachers right across the province, I can tell they're living it, and they're living it in different ways, Mr. Speaker. Some of them are involved in coaching within the school; some of them are involved in all sorts of extracurricular activity that they're not—they don't have to participate in—that they're not mandated to participate in, but that they want to do that. They want to be involved in that.

* (16:10)

I'm reminded, Mr. Speaker, of a teacher when I was in the Steinbach Regional Secondary School—I graduated in 1987 and wonderful school—it's still a wonderful school—and one of the teachers there—his name was—I hope he wouldn't mind me saying it—his name was J. D. Lees. And I think, you know, when I started in the school, he was one of the younger teachers there—one of the youngest teachers there. Now I think he's actually the senior teacher there. We were talking about this in Walmart a couple of days ago, the new Walmart in Steinbach and he indicated to me that now, I think, he's the longest serving teacher at the Steinbach Regional school. But when I was there, I think it was only his second year, and he was very involved in a number of different activities with the young people and we were organizing—there used to be a show called, if I remember, a show called Reach for the Top and some of my colleagues of the same generation were there so we organized a team, we organized a team for Reach for the Top. Now, the story's not quite done yet. Now, I know that some people think that, you know, you have to be quite smart to be on Reach for the Top, so there's some surprise that I may have been on the team; in fact, I didn't do all that well in high school, I'm sorry to say, but I was very good at sports. I knew a lot about sports because I watched a lot of sports. And so the teacher was building a team of people who knew a lot about math, or science, or social work and I happened to be—I knew a lot about sports, I was going to be on the team.

Anyway, they counted on my luck, you know, my luck, right, and talk about bad timing. Sometimes, timing's bad. But I—they cancelled the show before we actually got a chance to go on the show, so J.D. Lees, the teacher—in fact, J.D. Lees

used to be, ah, I'll get into that story after—J.D. Lees decided, well, what are we going to do? We've formed this group of people together and what are we going to do, and this relates, of course, to teachers doing extra-curricular activity as part of their first code of professional practice—conduct. And he said, well, we should have a little TV show.

At that time, Shaw was allowing people to put on TV shows on the local access channel. So we started up a TV show called The Regional because we went to the regional school, and we produced a bi-weekly TV show. And we, you know, we would interview people on the street, we would have a little news anchor desk and talk about things that were going on in the school, and this would air every other week on Shaw access within the community.

I'm heartened by the fact that, I think, those only appear on Beta, I think. I don't know that none of them would be on DVD now or anything, of course, it was so long ago, so it would be almost impossible to trace those sort of things.

But this was an example of a teacher who was taking a lot of extracurricular time to do something with the students. And I remember that very clearly, that time, it was a great time of my life. Now, J.D. also used to be the executive assistant for Sterling Lyon; he was the executive assistant for Sterling Lyon before he became a teacher. And so he knew I wasn't all that interested in politics in high school. but I was sort of interested in current affairs and so he started to ask if I wanted to come to different political meetings that were happening in the province and I did, because he still maintained an interest in politics. And it was a wonderful opportunity for me to really engage in politics.

I often say to people in the community that if you are upset with anything I am doing in politics, and that happens from time to time, that don't blame me, blame J.D. Lees because he's the teacher who got me involved in politics and so I'm—now my colleagues know who to blame, they'll be on the phone after this speech. But it's an example of a teacher who decided to put his students first. And to not just, you know, to do what they had to do, but to go beyond the way. And it's had a great impact on my life, so I wanted to make mention of that.

Now, there's a second, the second code of professional practice that the Manitoba Teachers' Society adheres to and that'll be directly relation to Bill 9, The Teachers' Society Amendment Act, and that is, a member acts with integrity and diligence in

carrying out professional responsibilities. Now, here again, now as I said earlier on, I think the vast, vast majority of teachers within Manitoba would adhere to this, without ever having to read the code of conduct. I think the integrity of our teachers, I think, really can't be questioned. And the diligence that they carry out their professional responsibilities, it goes back to some of the things that I was saying earlier, when I first started my brief comments, that the teachers, they come to work every day because I think they want to make a difference. They want to make a difference in a young person's life; they want to make a difference in their community.

And how you make a difference in a young person's life is day by day, step by step. You want to make sure that each and every day everything that you are doing is something that's going to make a difference. So those teachers they come into the classrooms and they do so with trying to connect with students. They want to ensure that each student is able to achieve to the best of their abilities, even though there are challenges that happen within our different schools, Mr. Speaker. There are, of course, challenges that happen.

We know—you know, I looked at a study a little while ago, Mr. Speaker. It was in the United States. They've done a lot of research in the United States on something called ACEs, and ACEs stands for adverse childhood experiences. And they looked at the composition of classrooms in many parts of the United States, and they looked at the different adverse childhood experiences that kids were bringing into the classrooms. And so that would include coming from countries where there was war; that would include coming from homes where there was addiction, coming from homes where there was abuse. And when they mapped out, you know, the different—how a classroom, an average classroom looks in the United States—this was an American study, although I'm sure it could easily be transposed into the Canadian setting—they found that so many of these kids in an average classroom of 25 to 30—25 or 30 students had these adverse childhood experiences. It impacted how they learned, and it impacted how they interacted within the school.

And what the real outcome of that study was is that teachers have to deal with so much more. I mean, they have to deal with what the kids are bringing from their own outside experiences, and that it's difficult often within the classroom environment, that the composition of the classroom can be difficult and may be very different than

maybe it has been over the last many years. And so members within the community, within the teaching community, they act with diligence and they act with integrity, but they know that it's difficult. They know that it's not easy, but they want to come out each and every day to the schools and do that.

And I can say without reservation that's been my experience, Mr. Speaker, when I've gone into the different classrooms, and you can tell it from the kids, you know, if—even if the teachers—even if, you know, you didn't have as much interaction with the teachers, just talking to the kids, you know, how much appreciation they have for their teachers, and it's the same for my son. We often talk about his teacher, and he speaks with great reverence about how much he enjoys being in her class. And so you wouldn't have to just talk to the teachers or watch the teachers; you can see the outcome of the—you can see the outcome through the kids because they express how much appreciation they have for their individual teacher.

Now I want to go on and look at the third item under the code of professional conduct for the Manitoba Teachers' Society, and that is, that a member avoids involvement in a conflict of interest, recognizes that a privileged relationship with students exists and refrains from exploiting that relationship for material, ideological or other advantage. Now this is essentially a conflict of interest clause, and we all know here what that means. We have conflict of interest legislation here that governs us as MLAs; caused a bit of controversy a while back when we saw many government MLAs taking free sporting tickets, Mr. Speaker, and so that became an issue of debate here in the Legislature and in the public and whether or not the conflict of interest laws are tight enough or how they compare to other provinces across Canada, and those are good debates to have. I think you want to ensure that not only are you acting with integrity in your job, whether it's as a teacher or as an MLA, but that you're seen to be acting with integrity because the old saying is that perception really is reality. And I think that that's true in a professional environment: perception really is reality. And so conflict of interest laws, or statements like this is, within the MTS code of conduct are really about ensuring that not only are people acting within the framework of that conflict of interest law but that the public has confidence, they have confidence that either us as MLAs or others who are in the field are acting in a way that they would expect to act.

* (16:20)

So this is another one of those—I think my colleague from Arthur-Virden said before that it was almost like insurance. You hope that you'd never have to use it, but you're glad it's there if you need it. And I think that the vast majority of teachers would never run afoul of this particular code of conduct just like the vast majority of MLAs don't run afoul of the conflict of interest laws, but you're glad that it's there. You're glad that it's there in case you need to use it. But I know, in talking to teachers throughout Manitoba, that they realize that they are in a privileged position, that they realize that they are in a unique and special position, and that's very true because when you look at the impact that teachers can have on an individual student's life, it's remarkable. And I hope that I'll have time yet, Mr. Speaker; I've got a number of studies that I'd like to talk about, about how teachers can impact an individual person's life. And so, if I have the opportunity later on, I'll get to that point. But there truly is a privilege for a teacher to be able to, in the context of nine or 10 months, to be in a classroom and to interact with young people and to impact their lives.

And we all have the experience of going through a classroom or going through a learning environment and then seeing the teachers, you know, years later or in the community and having that sort of special feeling again, and you always kind of feel like you're still a, you know, just a young kid and they're still the teacher and it really is a special relationship, and that opportunity to impact individuals as a teacher is a very, very real thing. And I think that teachers take it very seriously, that they don't take it for granted, that they know that they are in a privileged position and that they respond in a similar fashion.

There's also—and I think I'm on to No. 4 of the professional codes of conduct for the Manitoba Teachers' Society: that a member's conduct is characterized by consideration and good faith. He or she speaks and acts with respect and 'diginy'—dignity and deals judiciously with others, always mindful of their rights.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that that is a great statement of principle and practice that all of us could adhere to, and so it's great that it shows up within the code of conduct for the teachers, and I think that it's a great principle that each of us could learn from, that we—that all of our actions and our conduct is characterized by good faith, that we're

doing things with all the right intentions and for all the right reasons.

We as MLAs, of course, we have our own requirements that we act in good faith. Municipal councillors have their own—and these are more legal requirements—that a person acts within good faith because we have the ability to make decisions through legislation and regulation, and you have to act in good faith; you can't act maliciously. You can't act in a way that is detrimental to an individual. So we want to ensure that we don't do that as MLAs, that we're not acting in bad faith, and, of course, teachers would do the same thing to ensure that they are acting and conducting all of their affairs within the classroom and within the education environment in good faith.

And also the second part of that, then, is: that she or he speaks and acts with respect and dignity, judicially with others, always mindful of their rights.

And I think we see that play out in classrooms, Mr. Speaker, where teachers do their best to ensure that they're interacting with students in a way that the parents find appropriate and, when there are difficult things that happen, that they're willing to speak to the parent or they're willing to deal and to work out situations that maybe didn't go as well or as planned as one will have hoped for.

Number 6, Mr. Speaker, on the Code of Professional Practice is: A member first directs any criticism of—

An Honourable Member: You don't need to go to the bathroom, do you?

Mr. Goertzen: I appreciate the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) concerned about my personal needs, Mr. Speaker. It's always nice to have that support of members in the Chamber, and I appreciate his words of encouragement. He, you know, I was actually about to—I was about to wrap it up, but now he's encouraged me to go on, and I want to thank the member for Assiniboia for that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) has against teachers. She doesn't seem to want to—us to talk about teachers. I, for one, respect teachers.

An Honourable Member: Stand up for teachers.

Mr. Goertzen: I will stand up for teachers, and I'll continue to support teachers by talking about the great work that they're doing and, if the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) doesn't appreciate teachers in

Manitoba, then she should stand up and say so, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, No. 6 on the Code of Professional Practice is: a member first directs any criticism of the professional activity and related work of a colleague to that colleague in private. Now, there's more to it than that, but I'll stop there because that point is worth emphasizing.

And, it's actually a principle that many of us, I think, could use in different parts of our lives, whether it's—it might not work as well here in the Legislature, but it might work well in committees and different work that we do outside of the Legislature, Mr. Speaker. That we ensure that, if we have a problem with somebody, or we have a concern about something that somebody has done, that we first go to them; that we try to work it out privately. Now, again, that might not work here so well because question period is not really designed for that sort of thing. But, when you're in a committee or you're in an organization, or in a family environment, or in a faith-based environment, I certainly think it is a good thing to—if you have a concern with somebody or something that somebody has done, to go to them directly.

Because often, you know, we live in world, Mr. Speaker, where there's so many means of communication. There's so many ways to communicate with people, and yet I don't know if there's ever been less real communication between individuals. We deal with Blackberrys and our emails and text messages and social media, and often the communication gets lost within there because we don't see the verbal expression, the personal expression, between individuals.

So we have that—I'm not sure, the Minister of Youth and Opportunities seems to be signalling something with his Blackberry, but I—

An Honourable Member: He's sending messages to you.

Mr. Goertzen: He's sending me messages, apparently. I'll look once I've got done my brief comments, Mr. Speaker. I assure him that I'm almost near the end.

But I—communication, Mr. Speaker, even though we have more ability to communicate now than we ever have at any time in human history, there probably has never been less real communication because we miss that personal interaction, we miss the personal expression.

And there are studies—I don't have them with me, I can probably bring them next time if members want—but there are studies that indicate that most of the communication is expressions—either inflection, voice inflection or personal facial expressions, Mr. Speaker, that that's the real communication that happens between individuals. And all of that is lost on email and all of that is lost on social media.

And I'm sure that everybody here has an experience, Mr. Speaker, of sending an email to somebody with a certain intention or a certain desired intention. And then you get something back from them that you clearly tell they've read something else into it. And I was told by somebody that, in fact, email communication really shouldn't be used for anything other than, you know, setting up appointments—very, very basic communication. That any kind of real communication that requires back and forth should be done in person, because you lose so much of the context when you're not face to face with somebody.

And I think in many ways that is what this particular provision of the code of conduct for the teachers, No. 6, that a member first directs any criticism of the professional activity and related work of a colleague to that colleague in private. I think that's what that's about, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how long it's been there within the professional code of conduct. It might not have been a reflection particularly to the changes in technology or the changes in communication, but I certainly think that is a great principle: that we should be talking directly to each other if we have an issue or a problem with something that somebody has done.

And so the teachers, I think, by putting this into their code of conduct, probably avoid a lot of unfortunate situations. In fact, in some ways they avoid having to ever use Bill 9, The Teachers' Society Amendment Act. They avoid ever having to use mechanisms to figure out whether or not there are problems when you go individually to a person.

And I expect that's something that they probably give to their students, that kind of a lesson. And say to their kids in their classroom, if you have a challenge or difficulty with each other, try to work it out first, try to talk to each other first, because it's—*[interjection]*

And, apparently, the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) is the kind of person who did that or does that. Now I don't think he was at Assiniboia Downs at noon today. So he apparently didn't go and try to

talk face to face with the people at Assiniboia Downs who are concerned that he's trying to shut them down and pit two good organizations against each other. So he can shout from his seat that he uses that kind of practice, but he doesn't actually put it into practice, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I got a little bit diverted from there. Mr. Speaker, I think that the—

* (16:30)

An Honourable Member: Back on topic.

Mr. Goertzen: Back on topic, Mr. Speaker, before—I wouldn't want the Clerk to call me out of order or anything.

The issue, about ensuring that you're talking to each other is a valuable lesson, and it's one that the teachers have put in their code of conduct to practise. And I'm sure it's one that they transmit to their students and talk to them about the importance of it. And it's never been more important because, as we go along, there's going to be more ability to communicate with each other but less actual communication, less face-to-face communication, and so much gets lost in the debate.

You know, again, Mr. Speaker, I've been speaking so positively about teachers and what teachers do in the classroom, and the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) doesn't want to hear it. You know, she doesn't want to hear about the great things that teachers do in our teaching environment. I don't know why she doesn't like teachers. I don't why she doesn't support the education system and the teachers within our system. But I'm going to continue to support them, even if the member for Riel doesn't have—or doesn't want to hear good things about what teachers do.

Now, I'll continue on with point No. 6 under the Code of Professional Practice. It also indicates that only after informing the college of the intent to do so, the complainant may direct, in confidence, the criticism to appropriate officials through the proper channels of communication. A member shall not be considered in contravention of this section in the following circumstances—and I'll go into each of the circumstances in a little bit more detail in the future, Mr. Speaker, but clearly within this they want to ensure that the complainant is directing, in confidence, the criticism to the appropriate officials.

And now it's good that it's particularly done in confidence and that there is some security in there,

because often, if you're not able to deal with these things person-to-person and not able to have success at that step, Mr. Speaker, then you want to go to the next level. And so the next level, in this particular situation, would be going to the college and going to the officials and saying: Here's my issue. Here's why I think that somebody within the profession hasn't done something that they should do. And you'd want that to be in confidence for both parties. There's a reason why both parties would want to have that in confidence. Of course, the person who's complaining, the complainant, the person who's making the allegation or accusation, wouldn't want it known to their own colleagues that it's going back to them, that somebody has gone to the officials and are complaining. You wouldn't want that known necessarily. So you'd want that to be in confidence. So that is there to protect the person who's the complainant. And then, of course, there's the good practice in principle for ensuring that the person who's had the complaint levelled against them is also in confidence.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that that is also very, very important, that somebody who has a complaint levelled against them, that that is in confidence because nothing might come of it. And often—you know, I always worry that we're in a society with the media and such the way it is, that complaints get out into the public, and then if something is found not to be justified or not to be true, the image is still left there, and it's very, very difficult for people to unwind that. I think the analogy is you can't put the genie back in the bottle, you can't unscramble the egg, once an allegation becomes public, even if later on it becomes clear that, in fact, there was no merit to it.

So the confidence that is discussed within the professional code of conduct, Mr. Speaker, is particularly important because you want to ensure that the person bringing forward the complaint doesn't have his own colleagues or her own colleagues concerned that that complaint was raised, and you want to ensure that, if you're the person who's being complained about, that it doesn't become public without there being some sort of recourse overall.

Now, it goes on, Mr. Speaker, to say that there are some exceptions: A member shall not be considered in contravention of this section in the following circumstances: (a) consulting with the society or the president of the member's local association. And I think that that's to ensure—and I'm

sure I could be corrected by people within the profession, but that's to ensure that the lines of communication remain open between the president of the society or the member's local association. You want to be able to go and speak to those who are representing you within the union to do that within confidence. I mean, that's something, I think, that is often protected in labour law and in labour environments, that you want to have that freedom of communication within it.

The second is a member should not be considered in contravention of this section in the following circumstances: by taking any action that is allowed or mandated by legislation. Well, that makes common sense, Mr. Speaker, that you want to ensure that, if there is something in law that says you must do or something that is protected in law, that nobody can take action against you, because that would be essentially a conflict between a legislature or a civil—or civic environment or parliament. When they've passed a law, you need to be able to rely on that then you can adhere to that law, that you could follow the law. And, if you were to be found in contravention of a code of policy, even though you followed the law, that would, of course, put a member of any society in an untenable position. It would put them in a terrible position of conflict because how could they resolve that. They'd be in a position, I suppose, of not following the law or being in contravention of their professional society. And you'd never want to be put in that position because it's literally, as the saying goes, a no-win situation.

And so they put that particular exception in here to ensure that individuals within the Teachers' Society—and I think it would be good practice within any sort of professional organization—don't have that conflict, that they don't have to worry that by doing one thing they are breaking something else, breaking a law on the other side. So I think that that is a good exception.

The other exception within here is that a member shall not be considered in contravention of this section in the following circumstance: where the member is acting in good faith and without malice in the discharge of the legitimate duties of his or her appointed or elected position. There's often, in legislation, good-faith provisions, and we see that within the code of conduct here. The good-faith provisions are to ensure that somebody—essentially it's sort of a layman's term, but they can do their best. They're not doing something in a malicious way; they're not trying to harm somebody. They're trying

to do their best. They didn't do it with any sort of ill intentions. So it's to ensure that somebody who thinks that they're doing something for all the right reasons is protected. So we see that in various pieces of legislation; we see that in different governances over boards; we see that in different governances over corporate situations.

It's a good-faith principle, because we want to ensure that somebody who is really acting with clean hands—and there's a provision that we often talk about on the legal side, that you can't come to court with dirty hands, that your hands have to be clean. And you can't get action for something if you're coming with dirty hands. In this situation, it's more of a clean-hands provision. If you're acting in good faith, if you're doing it with clean hands, you're saying that I believe that this was the right thing to do and it's something that I needed to do, that you will have that protection. So I think that that is important.

Provision No. 7 is that a member does not bypass immediate authority to reach higher authority without first exhausting the proper channels of communication. Now, I assume this is about—we would use it, I think, in common terms, of not going over somebody's head. You know, we would say that in our common parlance that we have certain channels of communication. Whether that's within a political structure or whether that's in a corporate structure or whether that's in a different sort of structure, there's always a hierarchy. And you want to follow those proper channels, and that it's important to follow those proper channels because if you decide not to, you decide not to follow the proper channels, often you find yourself sort of bumped back down the ladder, that you have to sort of go back to the beginning because the person who might actually be able to resolve the situation is, to use the term, a person's immediate superior. Now, it might always not be superior in terms of a position, but it's somebody who is mandated to deal with particular situations. And that's to ensure that on every step of the way in an organizational structure that you're going to the person at the next step who has the ability to, perhaps, deal with the situation so it doesn't have to fall back or go to somebody else who maybe really shouldn't be dealing with that particular situation.

So it's a good clause, I think, to have within the Code of Professional Practice for the Manitoba Teachers' Society. I say it's with—certainly a well-considered document, well-tested, I'm sure. I'm sure

that they looked at other professional codes of conduct to see what should go in and then over time you adjust. I mean, these things are, there's an old saying that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is like a living tree, that the Constitution is like a living tree that's always changing, Mr. Speaker.

* (16:40)

And—[*interjection*]—what's that? And I know the member for—the Attorney General, I'm not sure if he was confirming that the Charter is like a living tree, but it truly is, and I think that the code of professional conducts really are too. They're ever-changing, Mr. Speaker. There is always movement. It's not a heritage tree. It's just a living tree, not a heritage tree. But I digress a little bit again. I do think that it's a well-considered clause.

The eighth clause, Mr. Speaker, is that a member makes ongoing effort to improve professionally. Now this is something that's quite common, I think, in many different professions. I know in the legal profession, in the medical profession, I think in the accounting profession, there are requirements for upgrading. There are requirements that you continue to better yourself in terms of education, that you stay current in a variety of different ways. So this is simply a portion of the Manitoba Teachers' Society code that says that members will make ongoing efforts to improve professionally.

And I think I, you know, I—having interacted with many teachers recently, that's clear. Regardless of whether or not they've been teachers for a long time or they're new within the system, I always see teachers trying to find out the latest ways to improve their classrooms, the latest ways to improve the learning environment, Mr. Speaker. And they are, by and large, I think striving to ensure that they are doing the best for their students.

And so a lot of these codes actually tie in together, Mr. Speaker, because I would look actually at No. 1, the first code that I read, a member's first professional responsibility is to her or his students, and say that that ties into very well with No. 7, a member—or sorry, No. 8, a member makes an ongoing effort to improve professionally, because those two are actually related. If you are always making an effort to improve professionally, you really are putting your students first.

And so often these are often complementary, Mr. Speaker, these different codes, and so we see that there is a great relation between putting one's students first and also ensuring that you are

improving professionally. So it's not unusual that you'd see that sort of overlap, but they are both unique and specific points, and I think it's good that they're delineated as specific and separate points. So I think that there's lots of different ways that teachers are going about doing that. There's many different courses that can be taken. I think there are professional development days that teachers take and that they're able to go to certain courses and to better the learning environment.

You know, the education degree has changed a lot. There now is a component where I think you have to have a predegree, sort of a teachable degree, before you go into the faculty of education, so that in and of itself has changed a lot over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker.

So many teachers already have that sort of pre-bachelor's degree, and then they get an education degree. Some go on and take a post-laureate, I think it's called, degree, Mr. Speaker, in teaching. And it allows them to go into administration if they choose to. So I don't think that for most teachers this is a difficult thing to achieve because I think teachers generally have a love of learning. I mean, they themselves have a love of learning, and then they want to transmit that love of learning to others by being a teacher.

So, while it's in their professional code of conduct because it's important to state it, I don't think this is one that's difficult for many teachers to adhere to, because I think that they want to learn more about their chosen profession. They want to ensure that they're doing things that are best for their students. They want to ensure that they're up on the latest techniques in terms of how to ensure that a young person is having a good learning experience, Mr. Speaker, and that was evident when I was visiting my own son's classroom. That—if there was anybody who wasn't up on things in terms of technology within the classroom, it was those who weren't in the classroom; it was us as parents. There were many other parents there who were sort of looking at wonderment at the different technology that we saw within the classroom system. So it is—

An Honourable Member: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: Honourable member for River Heights, on a point of order.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I'm raising this point of order now because I needed a little bit of time to review the tapes from today and to check several specific facts to be able to bring this forward.

My point of order relates to the way the government members answer questions in question periods and make statements in the House.

First of all, it has been noticeable that when members—as with the response by the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship (Mr. Mackintosh) to my specific questions on the timelines for achieving specific and important targets for a 50 per cent reduction in phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg, that the Minister for Conservation and Water Stewardship failed to even remotely provide words that would give any sort of credible answer.

And, secondly, I have noted that when giving an answer or making statements in the House and—for example, I give the statement by the Premier (Mr. Selinger), which I tabled yesterday, saying that there was a 39 per cent cut in the '95-96 budget of the Liberal government, referring to transfers to Manitoba, when, as the information which I table now, shows that the federal transfer to Manitoba was \$1.636 billion in 1993-94 when the federal government came to power, and that it increased to \$1.90 billion in '94-95, to \$1.96 billion in '95-96, and indeed reached \$2.2 billion in '99-2000 and \$3.15 billion in 2003-2004. These facts, as recorded in the material which I table, which is from the annual financial reports of Manitoba, are not even remotely close to the facts presented by the Premier.

My point of order, Mr. Speaker, is to show that there is much to be improved in the way the government answers questions, and, in my view, it's the—very important for the government to address these issues as we move forward in this legislative session.

Mr. Speaker: Any further comment to the point of order?

Seeing none, on the point of order raised by the honourable member for River Heights, I obviously take points of order very seriously, as I do matters of privilege, but I'd like to refer the honourable member to O'Brien and Bosc on the House of Commons Procedure and Practice. There's a sufficient precedent in matters such as this point of order that the member for River Heights has raised with us, and

it's not the—the Speaker ensures that the replies adhere to the dictates of order and decorum in a legislative process and, of course, parliamentary language, as all members know.

The Speaker, however, is not responsible for the quality or the content of the replies to questions that members may make in the House. So the Speaker has no jurisdiction or authority over that; it's up to the individual members themselves who are replying to the questions posed, who determine what those answers will be.

So I respectfully state to the member for River Heights that he does not have a point of order.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): With respect, Mr. Speaker, I challenge the ruling.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair having been challenged, all those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair will please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Mr. Goertzen: A recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

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

Order. Order, please.

The one hour allocated for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I'm instructing that they be turned off and we'll now proceed to the vote.

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

All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair will please rise.

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Helwer, Maguire, Mitchelson, Pallister, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 29, Nays 18.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair is accordingly sustained.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Regarding Bill 9—order, please—regarding Bill 9, when this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) will have unlimited time.

Order, please. The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

CORRIGENDUM

On Wednesday, May 1, 2013, page 901, second column, second paragraph, should have read:

Mr. Speaker, we merged two Crown corporations, Liquor and Lotteries. We found efficiencies there as well, and those savings are saving Manitoba taxpayers real dollars. As I mentioned, we did find \$128 million worth of administrative reductions in our—in-year spending exercise that we took on as part of Budget 2012. We've done that. We have moved to consolidate offices in Winnipeg, in rural Manitoba, in the north, so that we can better serve Manitobans at a more efficient cost to Manitobans. That saves Manitoban taxpayers' dollars and we're doing that.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 2, 2013

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