

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
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 23, 2013

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 46—The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2013

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 46, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2013; Loi corrective de 2013, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Swan: I can tell already the House is very excited about the continuation of an annual springtime tradition. This bill is primarily concerned with correcting typographical, numbering and minor drafting errors. This bill also includes some minor amendments to a variety of acts and repeals a private act and three outdated or obsolete public acts. Thank you.

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

Mr. Speaker: Any further introduction of bills?

Seeing none, we'll move on with petitions.

PETITIONS

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Yes, good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. 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, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by J. Sawatzky, M. Sawatzky, B. Klassen and many other Manitobans.

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

Further petitions?

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

And 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.

This petition's signed by E. Bourbonnais, R. Helda and M. Lafreniere and many more Manitobans.

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

The reason for this petition is as follows:

(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 to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is signed by M. Gobel, M. True, H. Miles and many other Manitobans.

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

And these are reasons for the 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 tax–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 signed by D. Temblay, D. Simard, M. Fouillard and many, many more Manitobans.

Municipal Amalgamations–Reversal

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

The 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 J.R. Didychuk, D. Donowalchuk and A. Alkour and many more Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase–Referendum

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, 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 a legal 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. Lange, C. Bueckart, L. Rodewald and many fine Manitobans.

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The 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.

This petition is signed by T. Bredir, K. Fedora, M. Kroker and many other fine Manitobans.

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

These are the reasons for the 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 L. Hildebrand, H. Boschmann, M. Fehr and many others.

* (13:40)

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 in 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.

This is signed by A. Comack, A. Estrada, T. Comack and many others.

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.

This petition is signed by R. Gillis, A. Cuthbert, K. Gordon and many other Manitobans.

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

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 of 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.

Submitted on behalf of L. Lampshire, A. Seidel, V. Williams and many other fine Manitobans.

Hydro Capital Development–NFAT Review

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this 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.

Therefore, 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 J. Olfert, P. Goertzen, B. Goertzen and many others.

Mr. Speaker: Any further petitions?

Provincial Sales Tax Increase–Referendum

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): 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.

And (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.

And this petition is signed by L. Keen, B. Peters, H. Hoepfner and many, many others, 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 to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by B. Spence, W. Friesen, D. Sager and many, many others.

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 A. Chubaty, V. Turick, D. Osadchuk and more fine Manitobans.

Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal

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

The background for this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate any municipalities with fewer than a thousand constituents.

(2) 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.

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

(4) 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.

(5) 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 a thousand constituents to amalgamate.

Signed by L. Koehn, R. Koehn and R. Dinair and many other Manitobans.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): J'aimerais déposer le Rapport sur les services en langue française pour l'année 2011-2012.

Translation

I would like to table the 2011-2012 Report on French Language Services.

English

I'm rising to table the 2011-2012 Report on French Language Services.

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 a number of guests with us this afternoon.

I'd like to start by acknowledging the grade 6 class in the gallery from Arthur-Virden community of Reston on behalf of the entire House and, of course, the honourable member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire).

And, of course, we also have seated in the public gallery from Horizons adult learning centre 15 students under the direction of Ms. Tara Debreuil. They are located in the constituency of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

And also in the public gallery, we have with us today students from Omega School under the direction of Patti Dola. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler).

And also in the public gallery today, we have with us Shania Sveinson, Lisa Ewanyshyn, who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson).

Also in the public gallery, we have with us today from the Coalition of Manitoba Motorcycle Groups Brian Segal, Sheila Farago, along with other members of the CMMG. And, of course, we also—who are the guests of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau).

And also in the public gallery, we have with us today Matt Barton, Jennifer Frain and Lori Hunter and staff from New Directions, who are the guests of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers).

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

*(13:50)

ORAL QUESTIONS

Vote Tax NDP Convention

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, this weekend's NDP convention will certainly be a love-in but probably not a think-in, not a think-in because when you're unanimous on approving of the broken promises of this Premier (Mr. Selinger) and this government, that doesn't show you're thinking. When you're of one mind that it's okay to hike taxes by \$1,600 per household in this province, that's not thinking. And when you're in complete agreement when it comes to jacking up the PST and tearing up the taxpayer protection act as well, that tells me you're not thinking.

And on the vote tax, it looks like there's going to be a Kumbaya moment there as well, everybody in accord with each other. But that wasn't the case last year. Last year, I understand there was a little division there, and that's good; healthy discussion can produce that.

But why? Why be against taking the vote tax when the PST is at 7 per cent and for it when the PST is at 8 per cent?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Acting Premier): I—it's an unprecedented level of interest in our convention. I will look forward to welcoming the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister) there.

I just—I do want to say to him, though, I, you know, it's fine in this House to disparage us and call us names, but the folks who come to our convention and their convention, the folks who come out and volunteer and work on campaigns, the folks who do that for no gain of their own but because they believe in something, I would never call the members of his party stupid, and I don't think he should call the members of mine that.

Mr. Pallister: Just a tad ironic from a party that wants to pay itself for not working and volunteering, I think.

Mr. Speaker, you know, here we have—I don't know what the Premier's afraid of. I don't know why the Premier won't get up and answer the questions I ask on the vote tax. I repeatedly ask these questions. I get no response from the Premier of Manitoba, and I'm disappointed—disappointed—in that.

The vote tax is a subsidy for lazy political parties; it's nothing more than that. And if it's so noble, why is the government so quiet about it? They have 192 communications staff with duct tape over their mouths? Doesn't make sense. No ribbon cuttings, no announcements. Why so secretive? It's almost as if the government was ashamed, as if the Premier was embarrassed.

Now, the Premier yesterday claimed he was open in this House, but we learned today that his speech will not be open; it will be closed. It will be closed to the public. It will be closed to the media.

Now, is the reason for this so that the Premier can speak to the only group in this province who actually supports the vote tax?

Ms. Howard: Well, Mr. Speaker, I know that his slogan there, when he was running unopposed for leader, was to aim higher, but it's certainly not the motto that he lives by in this House. I think it would be incumbent upon him to apologize for disparaging the members of any political party because they don't agree with him. But that's fine, he doesn't have to do that, I suppose.

Today, of course, is the day of the funeral of Elijah Harper in Red Sucker Lake, Mr. Speaker, and I think, perhaps, knowing that, we should be a little

bit more respectful in our tone in the House if the members opposite are capable—

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

Mr. Pallister: Just so there's no confusion, the group I'm disparaging is the 37 Manitobans over there who disregard the right of Manitobans to have the right to vote on tax increases.

This, Mr. Speaker, is a closed-shop meeting, and it's a closed-shop organization. It's a private speech, and it's an exclusive member-only speech where the Premier (Mr. Selinger) may, if he's accountable, may speak, but only to a small group of Manitobans, about his real plans for jacking up taxes next year and how much vote tax he's actually going to take.

But you have to pay only \$40 to be in the club. It's pretty open, unless you want to be an observer. If you want to go and observe it's \$500, which might be worth it because you won't have to listen to that speech.

Now, the fact of the matter is it's a closed shop and every Manitoban is funding the NDP now with the vote tax, so this year they can have a closed meeting. But I hope they understand, and I hope that Premier understands, that Manitobans now are paying dues for the NDP, and if they're paying dues for the NDP it better not be a closed meeting next year, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Howard: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is indeed something, coming from the party that closes their convention to the media.

I believe the speech he is referencing is the speech that will be delivered at the dinner. That dinner is open to anyone who wants to buy a ticket. If he wants to buy a ticket, he's more than welcome to come and listen to that dinner.

The Premier will also speak Friday and Sunday. Both those speeches are totally open. I imagine the media will be in attendance and will be there to hear those speeches, Mr. Speaker.

But I just want to say, on the issue of public financing, the member for Fort Whyte, who recently ran in a by-election, received \$16,000 in public subsidy for that by-election. I assume that cheque is being returned, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Morden-Winkler.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Morden-Winkler has the floor.

PST Increase Impact on Families

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, this NDP government continues to show that they are unwilling to listen to Manitobans regarding this proposed PST hike.

Nick Clayson is a constituent of mine who took the time to contact my office to send a message to this government. He sat down and he worked out on paper what the PST hike would cost he and his wife, and he's asking the NDP to reconsider their ill-conceived PST hike. Nick has said that there are many families living in Manitoba who simply cannot afford these kind of increases.

Nick's message to the Minister of Finance is this: Manitobans simply cannot afford your PST hike. What is the Finance Minister's message to Manitobans like Nick?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Well, Mr. Speaker, people like Nick do work hard for their money; there's no doubt about that, we understand that. People like Nick work hard for their money and they pay their taxes like Manitobans do so that they can have decent services in this province, services like health care, services like education. People like Nick pay their taxes and work hard so that they can—we can invest that money into roads and bridges.

What would really hurt Nick's family, Mr. Speaker, is if members opposite had their way and cut health care and cut education and cut investments in infrastructure. That's what would really hurt Manitoba families.

Mr. Friesen: Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker, what really hurts Nick and his family is \$400 million a year out of Manitobans' pockets back to this government.

Nick took the time to put pen to paper and provide an account of how the NDP's tax hike will actually affect one Manitoba family. He got out his calculator and he crunched the numbers, something that this Finance Minister would be advised to do with more frequency and accuracy, but Nick's math adds up. He conducted a budgetary examination of income and expenses for he and his wife, and he wrote that he was alarmed at the numbers. He calculated that 40 per cent of his spending was subject to PST, and as a result of the hike this family

of two will pay an extra \$576 in one year to this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, can this Finance Minister explain to Nick why this hard-working family—

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

Mr. Struthers: Well, maybe my friend across the way can get Nick to sit down and talk to his own leader, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister), about those numbers, because the member for Fort Whyte has inflated the number up to 1,600, Mr. Speaker. The member for Fort Whyte has trying to convince Manitobans that the PST increase will cost each family \$1,600.

Mr. Speaker, we have—members opposite should just pick a story and stick to it.

Mr. Speaker: The level is going up a little bit again. We have a lot of guests with us here this afternoon. Some of them are schoolchildren and I would like the honourable members to reflect on the fact of the impression that we're leaving upon the schoolchildren who are here visiting us today, perhaps for the first time, and I'm sure we would all want them to return to the House and visit our democracy in action. So I'm asking for all honourable members to please reflect on the level and the decorum in the House here this afternoon.

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

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, what's clear again is that, once again, the Finance Minister is not listening. A family of two, one year, PST alone, calculated out at \$576 per year back to this government.

*(14:00)

There's a lot that this Finance Minister could learn from Nick, who is speaking out against this tax hike. He goes on to say that because of this PST hike their family of two has to make decisions about where to scale back their spending, and he wonders how many families are in the same predicament. Nick says that many highly skilled people are going to Saskatchewan and Alberta for economic reasons and that he has done the math and if their situation doesn't improve they will also have to go west.

Will the Finance Minister crunch his numbers, do his math and admit to Manitobans like Nick that they cannot afford his spending addiction?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, what Manitoba families understand is that they live in one of the most affordable provinces in this country. We have the lowest auto insurance rates in the country. We have the lowest hydro rates in the country and, courtesy of this government, \$2.9-billion worth of tax relief over the time that we've been in government. That's real benefits for Manitoba families.

Compare that to when the Leader of the Opposition had his turn at government. A single low-income Manitoban at \$20,000 today pays less—pays \$326 less than when he had his opportunity. You know, Mr. Speaker, their—

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

Keeyask Centre Project Update

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): This NDP government has now spent \$4.5 million on a non-existent virtual Keeyask Centre, starting in 2009. The agreement calls for, and I quote: The main building would be designed to fulfill several functions in addition to a reception area containing work by local artists.

The local artists would like to ask the NDP member for Kildonan: Where is their Keeyask Centre?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Yes, as I indicated yesterday, Mr. Speaker, this matter was discussed in committee on April 9th. We talked about Hydro for about five hours. The member asked several of the questions, and the president of Hydro said, and I quote: The funding was advanced in accordance with the agreement. The band determined—and we are involved in how they have decided to earmark the funding for the project for various offsetting programs. We don't have oversight over the construction contracts. That's a band responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, the adverse-effects agreement on TCN provides for programs for access, land stewardship, healthy food, fish, traditional lifestyle experience, knowledge learning, Cree language, traditional foods. It's funding that's guaranteed from Hydro provided to the band for those programs that the band operates. And as the Hydro president indicated at the time when he discussed it and when we discussed it last month, it's the band's

responsibility. The Hydro doesn't provide the construction.

Mr. Schuler: The same agreement that the member quotes from says, and I quote: It would house museum-like displays of artifacts and a reference centre for information about Aboriginal language, culture and history in general.

The NDP member for Kildonan said, and it's on the record, none of this will happen because of a misunderstanding.

Now, under the Keeyask agreement, \$340,000 has to be paid to the Keeyask Centre this year for operating costs. Has the NDP member for Kildonan already paid the \$340,000 to run the virtual, non-existent Keeyask Centre?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the members have a habit: first two questions, they just make it up. The comments the member made about my statements are just made up. They think they can say whatever they want.

Mr. Speaker, construction was delayed last year and construction will start this summer.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, the money was flowed in 2009 and it was supposed to, and I quote: It would also provide a suitable environment for related uses such as traditional teachings, language teaching and perhaps displays of special student projects.

The NDP member for Kildonan spent \$6 million, and what does TCN get? No centre, no art display, no museum, no reference centre, no language teaching and no display of special student projects. This has to be the mother of all misunderstandings.

How could the member for Kildonan have failed TCN in such an epic way?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding that members do not want us to have agreements with First Nations, Hydro negotiated an adverse-effects agreement with TCN to provide guaranteed funds to TCN, adverse effects to deal with Hydro. And, in fact, TCN got ownership of the dams that the members opposite did not want us to build and want to hold up. And, as I indicated earlier, there's provisions in the contract for Hydro to provide funding to TCN to carry out those projects.

Construction was delayed last year because of the construction season, and construction will commence this summer.

Waabanong Anishinaabe Interpretive Learning Centre Project Update

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): In September of 2010, with great fanfare, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) stood on the riverbanks of Hollow Water First Nation and announced that the \$2.5-million Waabanong Anishinaabe Interpretive Learning Centre would be built by fall 2011.

I ask the Culture, Heritage and Tourism Minister: Is it built?

Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I thank my colleague for the question and the first one in a very long time.

Mr. Speaker, much as our government wanted all this infrastructure projects, cultural projects, to happen, some things sometimes go awry. There's some problem with—when all the bids were done, a construction company or a company was chosen, but something happened with that company and there's now some civil litigations.

Mr. Ewasko: Mr. Speaker, it's really nice to see that the seatbelt light is off on the ministers' chairs today.

Yesterday and again today, we had heard evidence of \$6 million that this NDP government had forwarded through Manitoba Hydro to the Keeyask Centre that doesn't exist.

Can the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism tell us whether her government has now added the \$2.5-million interpretive centre in Hollow Water to the list of the money is gone with nothing to show for it?

Ms. Marcelino: Mr. Speaker, no.

Mr. Ewasko: So which are we talking about? No to the centre? No, the money's not there? The money's been sent, but we don't have an idea what's going on? Mr. Speaker, \$6 million for Keeyask Centre, 2 and a half million dollars for Waabanong Anishinaabe interpretive centre.

Can the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism stand up today and be truthful with these communities? Where are their centres, and where is the money?

Ms. Marcelino: Mr. Speaker, after the dust has settled, a new construction outfit is chosen, I think there'll be something that the member opposite would be delighted to see. So I suggest stay tuned.

The Pari-Mutuel Levy Act Changes to Legislation

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Finance got caught with his hand in the cookie jar. The minister illegally withheld money from the Manitoba Jockey Club, money that was legislated by The Pari-Mutuel Levy Act to go to the horse racing industry. The minister stated in his budget that he's going to make legislative changes to The Pari-Mutuel Levy Act.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Is he still going ahead with those changes to The Pari-Mutuel Levy Act?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Well, Mr. Speaker, members opposite obviously believe that if they tell the same lie over and over often enough that they—it becomes the truth.

Mr. Speaker, we said very clearly to the Jockey Club, we said very clearly in the budget, we said very clearly in this House just exactly what we're going to do. Judge Dewar says that we have every authority to do it.

We're going to move forward and make the changes necessary to realize \$5-million worth of savings and have that \$5 million transferred from the Jockey Club into health care, into schools, into hospitals, into infrastructure. We think that's a better—

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

*(14:10)

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask the minister to read the whole report from Judge Dewar. If he goes to page 22, it clearly says—Judge Dewar said: The minister must act in accordance with the law as it now stands. In my respectful opinion, he has not done that.

Guilty as charged, Mr. Speaker. Is this minister committed to killing the horse racing industry in Manitoba, a \$50-million industry with 500 jobs around it? That's what the question is.

Is this minister going to change The Pari-Mutuel Levy Act?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, the Jockey Club—the Manitoba Jockey Club is subsidized by the Manitoba taxpayer to almost 90 per cent of what the money they bring in.

I am absolutely shocked that members opposite, who pretend to be entrepreneurs and free marketeers, that they would support an industry to the tune of 90 per cent of the Manitoba taxpayer dollar, especially when there's a private partner out there that can partner up with the Manitoba Jockey Club and help that jockey club become a lot less reliant on the Manitoba taxpayer.

We think Manitoba tax dollars—

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

Mr. Cullen: Well, if the minister reads the report, even Judge Dewar is questioning the agenda of the Minister of Finance. And I'm trying to determine the minister's agenda as well in relation to the Jockey Club and Assiniboia Downs. Now, Mr. Speaker, I wonder.

I ask the minister: What is his agenda? Is he going to renege on the deal that—of the VLT revenue? Is he going to renege on the deal that's signed by the Jockey Club and the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation? Is he going to renege on that deal and kill the industry?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, Judge Dewar said no such thing. Judge Dewar was very clear. He said, in black and white, he said that this government could move forward and make changes to the VLT site-holder agreement. He said that this government could move forward and make changes to The Pari-Mutuel Levy Act. He said that this government could move forward on the government subsidies that are provided to the Manitoba Jockey Club.

Nearly 90 per cent of the Jockey Club's money comes from the Manitoba taxpayer, Mr. Speaker. We think that money can be better spent on health care and on education and on roads and bridges in this province.

If—Mr. Speaker, if the Manitoba Jockey Club has a private industry partner that can help save horse racing in this province, I think we should support them doing that, not like members opposite—

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

Bill 20

Public Presentations

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, the NDP members are packing their bags and they're ready to head off to sing Kumbaya at the NDP

convention even though there'll be nothing on the formal agenda about what Manitobans are talking about the most, and that's the proposed increase to the PST.

Now, maybe at 3 a.m. in the morning in the dark hallways of the hotel some NDP members will be questioning their heroes on their bungling of the economy and the PST increase, but 3 a.m. isn't good enough for ordinary Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, who don't want to come to the Legislature to discuss the PST increase at a committee.

Will this government commit not to ramming through Bill 20 in the middle of the night at committee so that Manitobans don't have to be here at 3 a.m. to question this government, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Acting Premier): I want to let my friend know some of the topics we'll be talking about this weekend at convention, for his information, if he wants to come and listen and hear some of the debate.

Some of the resolutions talk about providing a strong minimum wage for Manitobans. Those are the kinds of things that people think are important. Some of the things people want to talk about: building Manitoba Hydro for the future for all generations, protecting core services in these uncertain economic times. That's very important to some of our members.

One of the motions that's attracted the most support is the motion supporting Bill 18 and supporting our agenda on antibullying legislation—

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

Mr. Goertzen: You know, I'm looking for the resolution that said that the government should have broke its promise in the 2011 election. I'm looking for the resolution that says the government should increase the PST from 7 to 8 per cent, Mr. Speaker. I'm looking for the resolution that says that they should do away with a referendum that Manitobans are legally entitled to, and I'm looking for the resolution that NDP members want Manitobans to be stuck here at committee at 3 in the morning giving presentation to a committee that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) invited them to.

Will they do the respectful thing and say to Manitobans, we won't jam you through the night, we'll listen to your presentations, not at 3 a.m., Mr. Speaker?

Ms. Howard: You know, we have rules in the House that govern committees. Those are rules that are agreed to by all parties. Those are rules that we've all lived with and many, many people in this House who have come down to the Legislature in past lives to present to committee at various times during the day and night. We know that sometimes, in order to do the job of governing and listening to Manitobans, it means that you have to be prepared to stay a little bit after 5 o'clock at night and listen to people, and we're prepared to do that, Mr. Speaker.

We look forward to a vibrant debate at committee, and we look forward to a vibrant debate this weekend.

Mr. Goertzen: Now, maybe the NDP are accustomed to cutting deals at 3 a.m. in the morning. They cut a 3 a.m. deal to falsify election returns, Mr. Speaker. They cut a 3 a.m. deal to hire a retired MLA to a job that should have gone to a current MLA. They cut a 3 a.m. deal to get the member from Minto to leave a leadership so the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) wouldn't win the leadership.

But Manitobans shouldn't have to come here at 3 a.m. in the morning to cut a deal with this government. They want to be able to come at a respectful time.

Will this government respect Manitobans, not jam Bill 20 through the night at 3 a.m., Mr. Speaker?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Howard: You know, it's interesting to me that the spectre of a few hundred people coming together to have some democratic debate about the issues that are important to them—issues like child care, issues like tuition programs for vulnerable youth, issues like environmental protection, issues like assistance for seniors and strengthening pension plans—it's interesting to me, Mr. Speaker, that the spectre of that should cause so much anxiety in the hearts of members opposite. There's really nothing to fear. There's nothing to fear in this gathering that's going to happen.

Health-Care Gap Low-Income Manitobans

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, as Evelyn Forget, University of Manitoba health economist, reports, under the NDP, Manitobans with low incomes have a declining health status. This is reflected in the Ds Manitoba received in today's

Conference Board report on life expectancy and the incidence of disease. The poor health support in Manitoba, as shown by Ds in accessibility and continuity of care, are contributing to the poor health status of low-income Manitobans.

I ask the Minister of Health: Will she commit today to take new measures in the next six months to reverse the growing and appalling trend, the gap in health care received by the 20 per cent of low-income Manitobans compared to the rest of Manitoba?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): We know that the Conference Board of Canada report is very clear across Canada about the great disparity that exists in health status between the wealthy and the poor. We know it is very, very clear that there is a great gap in health status between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Manitobans. We're very committed to doing everything that we can to reduce that gap by bringing services on reserve, like dialysis in Island Lake and in Berens River, by applying the Healthy Baby program to all babies in Manitoba and ensuring that we're providing all Manitobans with access to a family physician with a very aggressive target of 2015.

Certainly, I concede the point that the member is making about this gap in health status, and it's a shared responsibility. We all have to work together on this.

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

Mr. Gerrard: As Professor Forget has pointed out April 23rd in Calgary, there's this appalling and growing gap in health care and health-care status between low-income Manitobans and the rest of Manitoba.

As one example, rates of Pap tests for women are sadly dropping for the 20 per cent of women with the lowest socio-economic status. This government has failed dismally in ensuring that those who are the most vulnerable get adequate preventive health care.

*(14:20)

I ask the minister to tell this Legislature: What specific measures is she taking to increase the proportion of all women who receive a Pap test at the recommended frequency, but particularly those on low incomes?

Ms. Oswald: Yes, and I thank the member for the question.

I believe the member knows that a project under way in Manitoba, the PIN project, the Physician Integrated Network, is a critically important project for primary care taking place all across Manitoba. We know that the supports that we've offered through the PIN project on electronic medical records have helped prompt the family doctors in ensuring that they're providing more Pap tests. We've seen, as a result of the PIN project, a dramatic increase in the number of Pap tests performed. We believe, as this particular measure rolls out among all of our family physicians, the ones we're committed to providing to all Manitobans by 2015, will indeed dramatically increase that, and the member is right to ask this good question.

Mr. Gerrard: Well, I'm pleased the minister acknowledged the appallingly low results at the moment and the very poor results on the Conference Board report.

Professor Forget also highlighted that the lowest income earners in Winnipeg have 10 times the rates of tuberculosis, four times the rates of suicide and attempted suicide, two and a half times the rates of amputation for diabetes and twice the under-age-5 mortality rate compared to the rest of Winnipeg and Manitoba. These figures are atrocious.

I ask the Minister of Health: What specific measures are she and her government taking to reverse these appalling trends and the low Conference Board marks, which have occurred during the last 13 and a half years of NDP government?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, well, again, I can say to the member the greatest commitment that we're making is continuing to invest in health care regardless of global economic circumstances.

I would say to the member I find his line of questioning, while important, curious strange that it would come from the member that sat at the Cabinet table while withdrawing health and social transfer payments. We know that during that time, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights.

Mr. Gerrard: I would like a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Gerrard: The point of order that I would raise is that the member—the minister is astonishingly short of the mark, because while the Liberal government was in Ottawa from 1993 to 2006 there was a huge and dramatic increase in the expenditures and transfers for health care and for equalization payments.

And this minister should recognize those large increases that happened rather than trying to deflect from the poor performance of her own government.

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

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, I would just have to add to that point of order if I might, Mr. Speaker, that the actual reduction in transfer support during the mid-'90s is a matter of historical fact, and so, in fact, in one year in particular there were double-digit reductions, in percentage reductions, in the amount of transfers from the federal Liberal government to the provincial government at that time.

That's something that hasn't occurred, I would remark, and—since 1999 when the actual increases in transfers and various other supports have increased at a record pace.

So, in fact, the comments of the previous speaker and his point of order are quite in error. I would put that on the record.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for River Heights, this appears to be clearly a dispute over the facts of this matter. And I want to caution honourable members not to engage in debate or use points of order as a matter to engage in debate.

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

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, to continue her answer.

Ms. Oswald: Yes, very simply, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's infant mortality rate actually got worse in the 1990s while the member for River Heights was cutting health payments, while the Tories had their hand on the wheel. The rate was, in 1991, 8.4 per cent. Today the rate is down nearly 40 per cent, at 5.2.

We've got more work to do, but, honestly, these lectures, really?

Youth Addiction Services Government Initiatives

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, someone's extended family has people in it that have overcome addictions with help and support.

I was pleased to hear that the government of Manitoba has made a series of great announcements in the recent months aimed at improving addiction services for Manitobans.

Could the Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors and Consumer Affairs please inform the House what supports have recently been in place for fighting youth addiction?

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs): I'm pleased that we were able to continue to enhance addiction treatment throughout the province.

Two of the recent announcements were very, very heartening, because one was opening the first nonmedical detox outside the city of Winnipeg, where in Thompson we opened a six-bed unit. It's fabulous because it's going to provide great services in Thompson, Manitoba, and surrounding areas, and that was a good enhancement.

And again, a few days ago, we, again, announced that we were going to expand youth treatment. And the treatment that we are going to provide is one comprehensive facility for youth so that they could get detoxification, they could get treatment, they could get involuntary treatment, in one facility that's being managed by Marymount.

And that is in addition to the Behavioural Health Foundation expansion of women treatment just north of Selkirk.

I am pleased to be a minister that believes we need to continue to invest in treatment, unlike the Tories, who actually decreased—

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

Post-Secondary Education NDP Funding Promise

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): In the NDP's annual document of broken promises and lies, the spendP broke a promise. They broke a promise on funding for post-secondary institutions in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Advanced Education: Why was she asleep at the switch while

her NDP government broke its promise to post-secondary institutions and to every post-secondary student in Manitoba?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): I'm surprised a Conservative would ask a question about university funding in this House, because all we need to do is look at their record of funding.

Mr. Speaker, when we were faced with tough choices, when we were faced with difficult economic times, we made health care and education and family services a priority for families. And that is why Manitoba has the highest university funding in the country, a stark contrast to what they did when they were facing difficult choices. They cut or froze funding to universities for five years in a row.

Mr. Speaker, we don't do that on this side of the House. On this side of the House, post-secondary funding is a priority because we know it's the future of all Manitobans and the right—

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

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, the Minister of Advanced Education has wasted approximately \$15 million on a failed program called the student financial aid system. I say approximately because our FIPPA's on cost and the status of the program have been refused.

The wasted \$15 million would have been enough to fulfill the funding promises to post-secondary institutions for a further two years. We see broken promises on funding because of this minister's waste and mismanagement.

Mr. Speaker, will she apologize today to the institutions and students for in-her incompetence as Minister of Advanced Education?

Ms. Selby: Mr. Speaker, I will never apologize for making post-secondary education a priority to this government.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm also proud of the fact that when students go to financial aid, when they go to our system, they can find a bursary there, because when their leader was in Cabinet they cut the bursary program. There were no bursaries for students in the '90s under the Tories, but we brought the bursary back.

Mr. Speaker, we have increased enrolment since we've come in as government. We brought in affordable tuition and we've got a quality education.

Mr. Speaker, this year we have the best funding to universities across the country, stark contrast to what they did when they were in power when they cut or froze university funding for five years straight.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, I tried to keep the questions fairly simple, but I see the minister's still overwhelmed.

Tuition was frozen for 10 years in Manitoba and is now linked to inflation. Promises have been broken. Recent surveys indicate that the University of Winnipeg ranks 13th in Canada. Brandon University is 60, and the University of Manitoba is dead last when ranked with other universities in their classification across Canada. The minister has now tied their hands, given them no opportunity, no option to improve their rankings.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Advanced Education: Is she satisfied with those rankings? Is she content with breaking her promises to every post-secondary student in this province?

*(14:30)

Ms. Selby: Mr. Speaker, the promise I make to Manitoba students is that they will have an affordable, accessible and quality education when they come to Manitoba. We have the third lowest tuition in the province. We have the highest funding to universities across the country, the third lowest tuition across the country.

Mr. Speaker, the difference between this side of the House and that side of the House is we have guaranteed that tuition will be capped at the rate of inflation. But while they were cutting and slashing university budgets, you know what else they were doing? The member of the opposition—the Leader of the Opposition raised tuition 132 per cent at the same time as they slashed funding.

I'm proud that we've got the third lowest tuition across the country but the highest funding to universities.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. The honourable member for Midland has the floor.

Bill 33
Request to Withdraw

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Local Government introduced Bill 33, his forced amalgamation bill, for second reading on Tuesday. In his comments the minister praised the 1997 legislation as having broad public consultation. He also praised voluntary amalgamations, but these ideas seem to have escaped this minister, as his legislation was introduced under a veil of secrecy.

Will the minister withdraw his—this poorly designed piece of legislation and begin a process of broad public consultation?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to see the opposition raise the 1990s, especially 1997.

I recall the Leader of the Opposition standing beside Premier Filmon of the day blaming everyone who lived south of Winnipeg because they lived in a flood plain. This government stands beside people who endeavour flooding and who have flooding, but the Leader of the Opposition stood and blamed rural Manitobans, Manitobans south of Winnipeg, for somehow causing the flood and being involved in a flood.

Mr. Speaker, you know, they don't like to talk about the 1990s, you know, but maybe they should talk—

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): I think it's a clear case of false-memory syndrome, Mr. Speaker. On a point of order—on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: On a point of order, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Pallister: The member has just put on the record that he recalls me standing with the former premier—I don't know exactly the location—but it's a false-memory syndrome, I think, exhibiting itself, because I wasn't a member of the Legislature at that time.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

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

I believe I am correct in stating that it is the Leader of the Opposition who called the Filmon government one of the finest governments that Manitoba had ever—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Honourable Government House Leader, to continue.

Ms. Howard: I'm glad to see they stand by that remark. This is the same—this, of course, is the same former premier that the minister was referring to when he talked about a premier of the day, Premier Filmon, blaming people during a flood for living in a flood plain. They're welcome to stand by that comment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, I thank the honourable members of the House for their advice on this. There appears to be a clear dispute over the facts of this matter, and I will let that stand where it is.

So I must respectfully indicate that there is no point of order.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable metre—Minister of Local Government, to continue with his answer.

Mr. Lemieux: You know, with a House leader mention about Premier Filmon, I don't hear them clapping now, because that premier of the day did blame Manitobans, southern Manitobans, for living in a flood plain. And that was despicable, Mr. Speaker, and rural Manitobans remember that comment today.

Mr. Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**Motor Cycle Safety Awareness Rally
and CMMG**

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, everyone who knows me knows that I love all things motorcycle. What's essential to enjoying freedom on the road is that enthusiasts like me take safety precautions at every turn.

In every effort to promote road safety, I was honoured to deliver the proclamation for Motorcycle

Safety Awareness Month at the rally organized by the Coalition of Manitoba Motorcycles Groups, or CMMG.

This annual rally is a—successful in raising consciousness of motorcycles being on the road after a long Manitoba winter. Come spring time, many drivers forget about checking for bikes that are now back on the road. So, on May 4th, all levels of riders with all kinds of motorcycles came out for the safety rally.

These riders met at the Legislature, received bingo cards—depending on where they travelled, riders received stamps from sponsor dealers. They rode around Winnipeg, Selkirk and even as far as Morden. The rally ended up with a wind-up dinner and there was lots of great prizes there.

CMMG, the driving force behind the rally, is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of motorcycle safety, and this is achieved by a—supporting legislation reforms, encouraging education and spreading information to assist and continue enjoyed safety—enjoyment of two-wheeled motorization transportation.

The coalition has many effective campaigns over the year. Key to initiating the Mandatory Motorcycle Training Program, CMMG's recommendations were incorporated in the graduated licencing program. It was instrumental in securing pleasure and all-purpose classes for motorcycles, and they have helped 145 motorcycles removed from the higher, premium sport-bike category and successfully advocated for insurance-rate rebates.

By working with MPI and Safety Services Manitoba, CMMG has prepared motorcycle awareness and training videos. Thank you to the CMMG for the important work that they do, their strong determination—you are undoubtedly protecting and saving lives. And as the saying goes: watch for motorcyclists, check and check again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): April 13th, 2013, marked the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The Canadian Foodgrains Bank started with a simple idea—sharing food. The Mennonite farmers that began the Foodgrains Bank saw that they had an abundance of food and created the Foodgrains Bank so they could share their resources with others.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank plays a vital role in ending hunger in the world through receiving public donations of money, grain, time and commodities from their volunteers. Projects to support the Canadian Foodgrains Bank have sprouted across Manitoba, continuing to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank national total of more than \$5 million in donations to 76 countries around the world.

In its 30 years of existence, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank has made significant progress in alleviating hunger. A report by the food and agricultural organization indicates that the prevalence of hunger in developing countries has fallen from 23 per cent to 15 per cent in the last 20 years, however there are still 870 million people in the world who are hungry—and there is more work to do. Today, more than 1.1 million tonnes of food has been provided to people who are hungry in 80 countries around the world.

In celebration of 30 years of harvesting crops for the hungry, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank has put out the call for a—special contributions made in denominations of 30 for their 30 for 30 challenge. Whether it be 30 bushels of grain or \$30 a month in donations, Manitobans can be a part of a global effort to end hunger.

Branches across Canada are also organizing special fundraisers to celebrate the work of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Mr. Speaker, I encourage members of this House to congratulate the Canadian Foodgrains Bank on their 30th anniversary by participating in the 30 for 30 challenge. I hope to see a day where the Canadian Foodgrains Bank accomplished their goal of feeding all who are hungry in this world.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

New Directions

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): Today I want to commend the organization New Directions; it is an organization that works with children, adolescents and adults in a variety of settings in St. James and across Winnipeg.

* (14:40)

New Directions provides many different services to our communities. They offer counselling, support and prevention programs to families affected by sexual assault and by fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. They work with young single parents to help them

develop vocational plans and life skills. They facilitate recreation, education and work experience opportunities for youth and adults with intellectual disabilities. They assist newcomer youth from war-affected countries in attaining essential skills for the Canadian workplace. They run several supported living and community treatment centres for those who need them and much, much more.

Last week I attended a community barbecue held at New Directions' Erin Street location for the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. I had a chance to speak with Dr. Jennifer Frain, the executive director of New Directions, and was overwhelmed by the multitude of ways that this unique organization touches the lives of people in our communities, Mr. Speaker. Dr. Frain emphasized that their approach is not a one-size-fits-all. They find ways to support an individual's growth toward well-being on a case-by-case basis. New Directions has been providing these kinds of social supports in this way since 1885. So I think they're onto something.

This is an organization that believes in emotional, physical, intellectual and cultural well-being. Their holistic approach can include everything from drug treatment to music lessons, and many participants are involved in several of their programs. They honour people's strengths and develop partnerships with the children, youth, adults and families that take part in their programs to help them reach their goals.

Success can be measured in a variety of ways. Many of New Directions' clients have found balance within family, become addiction-free or found employment. However, I noted something else. The clients that were in attendance at the barbecue were enthusiastic, comfortable, engaged and seemed clearly to have a sense of belonging in the community, which is, as far as I'm concerned, is one of the first steps to well-being.

I would like to thank New Directions' staff and Dr. Frain for their amazing work in empowering people to improve their own lives and, as a result, improve our communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Snake Pits of Narcisse

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, if you go anywhere near Narcisse, Manitoba, this spring or summer, be prepared to find thousands of slithery, writhing red-sided garter

snakes. Only 150 kilometres north of Winnipeg, Narcisse is home to thousands of snakes which for years have been entertaining and frightening thousands of visitors.

Each year in the spring, over 70,000 snakes emerge in Narcisse after making—after spending the winter hibernating in the limestone snake pits. These snake pits are unlike anything else found in the world. Scientists from across the country and the United States will travel to Narcisse to study the rare site of thousands of snakes in one location, as well as their mating and migration habits.

The snake pits of Narcisse are a network of caves and crevices formed by underground water and collapsed limestone, and are the perfect location for hibernating snakes. Only by congregating below frost lines and taking up shelter in the limestone pits are the garter snakes able to survive from the harsh prairie winters.

Once the sun begins to shine and the snow starts to melt, the snakes slither forth for yet another exciting season. The Narcisse snake pits are protected by Manitoba Conservation and it's estimated that as many as 20,000 people come to the area each year to visit. At the site, visitors will find many orientation signs to guide them on a—and a three—on a three-kilometre walking trail that winds through native grassland and aspens—groves. There are even viewing platforms for those who are less fond of our cold-blooded friends and wish to keep their distance.

Regardless of whether you are a snake fan or not, Mr. Speaker, I encourage the members of this Legislature to put their fear aside for just a day and marvel in the wonders of nature and the importance of conservation. The thousands upon thousands of slithering, crawling red-sided garter snakes that mate and hibernate at the snake pits of Narcisse are worth the short drive for a summer trip you'll never forget.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Shania Sveinson

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Mr. Speaker, in every community in Manitoba there are children and youth who go above and beyond to make the world a better place and Shania Sveinson is one of those outstanding youth.

Last night, I was pleased to attend the Manitoba Teachers' Society Young Humanitarian Awards,

where Shania was recognized for her outstanding contributions. This prestigious award recognizes students from across the province who have shown leadership, compassion, creativity and a desire to improve the lives of others. In presenting the award, my former colleague and Gimli High School Vice-Principal Leona Groot was joined by Manitoba Teachers' Society President Paul Olson and Young Humanitarian Awards Committee Chair Arlyn Filewich, as well as my colleague the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan).

As a student leader at Gimli High School, Shania has demonstrated that volunteering in social justice initiatives can have an incredible impact in building a healthier and more vibrant community and province. In addition to being a member of numerous school clubs and a dedicated athlete, Shania has also volunteered with festivals and events in the Gimli area and has worked to protect the health of Lake Winnipeg. As a member of the Gimli Fair Trade Town committee, Shania has worked with the community and the Manitoba Council for International Co-operation to develop Gimli as a fair-trade-certified town. She also helped organize and facilitate public awareness events in partnership with the Interlake Women's Resource Centre for International Day of the Girl and the Silent Witness Project Memorial.

Shania's involvement in her community and school also led her to win a Manitoba School Board Association Citizenship Award, as well as the Association of Manitoba Municipalities' 2013 George Harbottle Memorial Young Community Leader Award earlier this year.

Young people are capable of accomplishing great things in this province, Mr. Speaker. The passion, determination and hope demonstrated by committed youth like Shania is an inspiration to all Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, Shania Sveinson and her mother, Lisa Ewanyshyn, join us in the gallery today, and I would like to ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in thanking Shania for her commitment to better—to a better world for everyone; you truly are an inspiration.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of urgent public importance.

Mr. Speaker: The matter for—the honourable member for Lakeside, on a matter of urgent public importance.

Mr. Eichler: In accordance with rule 36(1), I move, seconded by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen),

THAT regularly scheduled business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the provincial government's response to the country of origin labelling and the apparent refusal of United States to follow the World Trade Organization's ruling regarding this matter.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for—before I recognize the honourable member for Lakeside, I just want to reference this for honourable members. I believe that I should remind all honourable members that under rule 36(2), the mover of a motion on a matter of urgent public importance and one member from the other parties in the House are allowed not more than 10 minutes to explain the urgency of debating the matter immediately.

As stated in Beauchesne citation 390, under urgency—in this context means urgency of the immediate debate, not of the subject matter of the motion.

In their remarks, members should focus exclusively on whether or not there is an urgent need for this debate today and whether or not the ordinary opportunities for debate would enable the House to consider the matter earlier—early enough to ensure that the public interest would not suffer. I just wanted to reference that for all honourable members.

Mr. Eichler: Yes, I do want to comply with subsection 36(2) in regards to this matter of urgent public importance.

And I know today, just the announcement from the World Trade Organization in regards to the country of origin labelling, has a significant impact on the province of Manitoba, the country of Canada as a whole. And I know members of the governments also has been very much engaged in the debate in this particular ruling, that United States has decided to go against the country of origin labelling, not only against the country of Canada, but also the country of Mexico.

And I believe it's very important for us to debate this today, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the impact it's going to have, not only in the beef industry but the

pork industry. I know tomorrow there's going to be a debate on the farm bill, the US farm bill, so I think it's imperative that we, as all members of this House, have an opportunity to discuss this matter of importance here this afternoon

*(14:50)

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I—we certainly agree that this is an important issue. Whether or not it precisely fits the definition of a MUPI, we are prepared if the House is willing to set aside the next hour to allow members to debate it.

Mr. Speaker: I want to thank all honourable members for their advice to the Chair on whether the motion proposed by the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) should be debated here today.

I would note that the notice required on—by rule 36(1) was provided. Under our rules and practices, subject matter requiring urgent consideration must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not given immediate attention. There must also be no other reasonable opportunity to raise the matter.

I, no doubt—I do not doubt that this matter is one that is of serious concern to all members of the House as agriculture is an economic activity of vital importance to our province. I have listened carefully to the arguments put forward; however, I was not persuaded that the ordinary business of the House should be set aside to deal with this issue today.

I would like to note that there are several other avenues for members to raise this issue including questions in question period and raising the item under members' statements or grievances and, also, during the Estimates process. Therefore, with the greatest of respect, I rule that the motion is out of order as a matter of urgent public importance, but I do note and reference the fact that there appears to be a willingness of the House to consider this matter, as has been indicated, perhaps up to an hour in length. I would then, therefore, put the question to the House if there's a willingness to debate this matter for one hour.

So is it agreed that we will debate this matter for one hour? *[Agreed]*

Then we'll proceed with the debate on the motion put forward by the honourable member for Lakeside.

Mr. Eichler: I thank all members of the House for the opportunity to discuss this, and as we know, I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) has been involved and I know the current Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) has been involved in regards to the debate on the country of origin labelling.

And today's ruling that's come out, in fact, today—tonight is the deadline for this particular ruling to the United States to comply with, and they've taken it just too lightly. And I think that whenever we have the opportunity in this House to debate such things as the country of origin labelling and the impact that it's going to have on each and every Canadian, in the household budget, and we've talked about this before. The cost of processing the beef alone is in the neighbourhood of between \$40 to \$90 per animal is what it's going to be for beef, anywhere from \$25 to \$40 for pork. And what this really does is goes against what everything we have been doing in this House, in this province, in this country that's going to benefit all Manitobans.

And I know that the Minister of Agriculture has been very active on this file. I know the federal Minister of Agriculture has been very busy on this file. I know that the Trade Minister also has been involved in this file. And I know that the national cattlemen's association in the United States has been involved on this file and the Canadian beef producers been involved and the Manitoba producers, as well.

And I know that we're all very disappointed; we're all very disappointed in the stand the United States has taken to go against the country of origin labelling and carry on with the mandatory labelling that we have fought so hard. In fact, this morning I talked about it briefly in our discussions in regards to the New West Partnership and with our organization called SARL, and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we, as members of agricultural leaders and members of the United States agricultural leaders have also been very clear, very clear on our stand about country of origin labelling. This is an unnecessary cost that's going to impact every consumer in the province of Manitoba, every consumer in the country of Canada, and also every consumer in the United States of America. This is a protectionism that's going to hurt each and every beef producer, pork producer, and it's unfortunate the United States has taken this stand.

I know the Minister of Agriculture, federally and provincially, I will let him put his own things on the

record. I know he has a lot to say about this issue as well. And I can guarantee you that we will do as opposition, we'll work with the government, we'll work with the federal government to make sure that whatever we can do, whatever tools in our tool box we can use to make the United States change their mind, we will be more than happy to assist the federal and provincial governments in that regard.

Now, I know the current president of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Martin Unrau, he's going to be at our convention. He's been out in front of this issue. The numbers they use—and I'll just put them on the record so we're very clear on it—they say it's going between 90 and a hundred dollars per head on beef. Now, in regards to the pork, again, as I said, it was between 25 and 40 dollars.

And whenever we're looking at any changes to the COOL responsibilities for United States and Canada and Mexico—in fact, I know the Canadian Cattlemen's Association did get partnered with Mexico. And they talked about what was going to happen in regards to the obligations with United States. And Mexico has come on side with our Canadian president, Martin Unrau, who is from Manitoba, and we're very proud of that fact that he has done that. In fact, the Secretary of Agriculture for Mexico is Enrique Martinez, and also Bob McCain [*phonetic*], also from Mexico, they're very clear on their position as well.

And whenever we're looking at what's going to happen down the road, we really don't have that crystal ball. But I can tell you that the national cattlemen's association also has—and their—that president is from Montana, and he's also said that—let me get the wording here for you—that if the United States continue to ignore their international obligations, the fault of the WTO's ruling will be excessive to all consumers. And whenever we look at what—the Canadian Cattlemen's Association has spent \$2 million on this issue alone—this issue alone.

So I know that in a couple of weeks we're going to be meeting with our agricultural leaders, our counterparts from United States, Mexico and Peru, and I can tell you this is going to be on our agenda. I know that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) is going to be there to support his views, and I know Minister Ritz is also going to be there to bring us up-to-date on what the country of Canada's going to do. And I can tell you that the United States is also paying attention at the state and—levels at not only the Senate, but the Legislative Assembly

members as well. So we know that we're going to hopefully try and get United States government, the administration, to change their mind.

I know that the US farm bill, as I said, is going to be debated tomorrow again, and I know I have a conference call at 9 a.m. tomorrow morning. And it's never too late—it's never too late—for a government to change their mind in regards to a ruling that they decide they want to enforce. And this goes against every trade organization, not only Canada but Mexico and the other countries that we've been negotiating with in good faith. This takes us back a long ways, back too far, because whenever we get to the point where we've changed positions—the United States has changed its position through their own ideas, and I'm still having a hard time grasping my idea about what they want to do other than protectionism, but I can tell you it's a decision that's going to impact the trade agreements as we move forward.

And I know that we only have an hour and I've spoken close to my allotted time already, but I do know that all members of the House want to put a few things on the record so we'll leave it at that, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Thank you to the MLA for Lakeside of bringing forward the issue, and I definitely want to echo a number of the comments the member from Lakeside has brought forward.

I've—as he indicated, I've been in some serious discussion with Minister Ritz a number of months ago, because we sensed if there was going to be trade actions, 'retally' actions we need to start focusing on possible solutions. And I want to assure you that I've reinforced it in the media numerous times that we, as the Manitoba government, Agriculture Minister, support Minister Ritz's movement towards—to deal with the COOL regulations.

And I want to just reminisce on my personal experience as a cattle producer for a number of years of my life. And the BSE definitely took its toll on a number of the livestock producers in the beef industry, and this is just really another institution of trying to recover from the BSE scenario. And I want to assure the livestock producers—I want to ensure all livestock producers—that we, as the Manitoba government, are going to be there with Minister Ritz, the federal government, to move forward to lobby as hard as we can, because we value the importance of livestock industry in the province of Manitoba, and

we will continue to fight with them. So I want to ensure, for the record, the livestock industry is a major, major benefit to our economy in the province of Manitoba.

* (15:00)

But I also want to recognize the importance of the—previous ministers have spoken against this, and unfortunately, we've made some mileage but all of a sudden we've lost some mileage. But I was—also want to indicate that I was down in Minnesota this March, and I had a fairly lengthy discussion with US legislators, agricultural officials and industry representatives. In fact, some of the industry representatives were people from the pork industry in Minnesota, and there was no negativity whatsoever. They were looking forward for additional hogs coming in from the province of Manitoba because their processors need the hog numbers in the US as well. And we have a fine Maple Leaf. We have HyLife in our province. But we do grow a lot of hogs in our industry and we could definitely export them, and that's an added benefit to the US economy.

So I'm very proud to say that we're here on behalf of all the livestock industry, but I also want to recognize the beef industry, which I'm quite familiar with, and as I indicated, the BSE definitely took its toll. And also with the latest situations with the feed prices, whether it's in the hog industry, whether it's in the beef industry, this is added to another challenging scenario as far as us trying to sustain the livestock industry in the province of Manitoba.

But I also want to make note on the record that it's been over a decade that we've lobbied for the COOL, and I, first of all, want to indicate that, and the COOL was a key factor when Mr.—former Premier Doer was on a trade mission to Washington in 2008 that we had a very long discussion. In March of 2—March 14, 2008, former Premier Doer discussed MCOOL with Minnesota governor in one of the one meetings that he had with him. Also, on November 13th—oh wait. Minister Agriculture Rosann Wowchuk met with a federal counterpart to discuss the implications of MCOOL on livestock on the industry in the province of Manitoba. And July 7th of 2009, former Minister of Agriculture Rosann Wowchuk and her western colleagues wrote federal ministers of agriculture and international trade urging Canada to request a dispute settlement at the WTO.

March of '09, Michael McCain, president of—CEO of Maple Leaf Foods, praised Manitoba for

defending hog producers on COOL. He wrote: You have previously taken a very active and helpful role in defending Manitoba's interests in COOL issues, and on behalf of Maple Leaf Foods and the entire pork industry, we are grateful if you would express your concerns to the Prime Minister and US political leaders. And we did, we did, Mr. Speaker.

In February of 2010, Premier Selinger was in Washington and lobbied for changes to COOL. So I'm very proud of our government of moving forward to sustain the COOL regulations as they are, and we need to be very 'vigilant' working with Minister Ritz, the federal government, towards the importance of the livestock industry in the province of Manitoba. But I also wanted to indicate to you that in our discussion with Minister Ritz, it was very 'vigilant' about the fact that we need to work together, and I want to ensure members opposite that we are going to stand united in fighting the COOL regulations.

But just on some additional facts, in 2012, slaughter hog exports are down 77 per cent from the pre-COOL of 2007. Also in a recent report from the Alberta estimates that since the implementation of COOL legislation in 2008, the financial harm to the Canadian pork industry has been approximately \$1.9 billion. This figure does not include the negative margins of isoweans.

Since COOL, many US processors in the northern plains and the Midwest stopped accepting and restricting access to Canadian animals in their facility. Despite the WTO ruling in June 2012 against COOL, today, the US introduced changes that will not bring them into compliance with the WTO.

So I want to ensure you that I had been in consultation with Minister Ritz. We continue to have discussions with other Ag ministers across the—across Canada, and I want to assure the livestock industry for the record that we are going to be—stand united to fight the COOL 'regulation' as much as we can, and I thank the opportunity to speak to this motion. Thank you so much.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I want to thank the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) for bringing forward this matter of urgent public importance, thank the Minister of Agriculture for his comments as well. Obviously, the damage, Mr. Speaker, to the COOL legislation is well known in Manitoba. It's already been outlined by members of this House, so I won't repeat that because I know there's other members who want to speak on this particular MUPI.

But, certainly, I think all of us can recognize that the decision, the apparent decision by the United States not to follow the WTO decision is not only damaging, I think, to the industry, but it is damaging, I think, to broader discussions and broader relations. And I want to indicate that as a member of the Midwest-Canada-US relations committee I'll certainly be speaking to my colleagues in the United States who are on that committee to express the disappointment on behalf of the Legislature for the decision that has been made in the United States, and asking them to also speak to their colleagues in the United States so that we can have a decision that is respectful of the WTO decision.

All of us know that the dispute mechanism—resolution mechanism within the World Trade Organization is there exactly for this reason, to ensure that where there are disputes among trading countries—and, of course, we don't—we acknowledge that United States is a great—a friend and ally, generally, Mr. Speaker. But where we have disputes, and people will have disputes whether they're in families or business or in the Legislature, but there needs to be a mechanism to deal with those disputes and the World Trade Organization and the mechanism for dispute resolution is there exactly for that reason. And the strength of the WTO dispute resolution is in people adhering and countries adhering to those decisions. And so it was with great disappointment, of course, that we learned today, obviously disappointing to the producers who are so impacted by this trade barrier and, certainly, the COOL legislation from the US is a trade barrier, disappointed that the government down south doesn't look like they're going to adhere to the WTO decision. So I want to commit, on behalf of my constituents and other Manitobans and MLAs in this House, that my role on the Canada-US relations committee, I'll certainly be in contact following the resolution of this debate with my friends in the United States to express our disappointment.

And I recognize the federal Conservative government, Mr. Speaker, has been a strong ally of the industry in bringing forward the challenge. I know they'll continue to be a strong ally of the industry. I recognize the ambassador to the United States, our former premier, has also been a strong ally in terms of trying to overrule the COOL legislation in the United States. So I think this is probably one of those issues where we're unanimous and we have unanimity. It's important that we speak with a united voice on this particular issue of

ensuring that the dispute mechanism and the order that was issued from the WTO is followed.

So I want to assure, again, the House that I'll do my part in terms of my role on the committee with the midwest legislators' forum, and I know that other members want to speak to this resolution, so I'll keep to my comments brief and to those points, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on—

The honourable Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): I'm very pleased that the members opposite have brought up this matter of urgent public importance. It's not very often that we do agree in this Chamber on a number of issues, but we certainly agree that this is a matter of urgent public importance, and I appreciate that they've brought this to table for this discussion today.

In fact, in my role as Minister responsible for Trade, I've been asked to be the Manitoba chair for the International Legislators Forum, and have done so for the last couple of years—to be the government representative and co-chair, I should say, with my colleagues across the floor. And the reason for that was because although the International Legislators Forum was initially introduced to deal with issues around flooding on the Red River basin, we thought that it's a good forum that we can use to expand interests of mutual concern such as COOL. And the very first time I had the opportunity to be the government lead at the International Legislators Forum, we were able to get topics for discussion that included barriers to trade.

* (15:10)

We all know that the United States, though they've still—are a long way from recovering from the global economic downturn, we all know that it's a very important trade partner for Manitoba. We are the third least reliant jurisdiction on the United States for trade, compared to other jurisdictions in Canada, but they still account for the lion's share of trade with Manitoba, over 60 per cent, if I'm not mistaken—I think about 63 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

So it's important when issues like this arise, that have the impact that they have, that we have allies in the United States who can look at these issues through that lens of understanding the impact that it's

going to have on a very integrated supply chain, Mr. Speaker.

So I appreciate that the members opposite have brought this particular issue forward. And that I would suspect, in light of the fact that it was a very recent ruling that was brought forward, and in light of the fact that the Americans have chosen to introduce new rules that don't necessarily address the concerns that were raised by the panel ruling, that there'll be a further discussion about this particular issue as trade continues to be on the agenda at the International Legislators Forum that we are privileged to host this year.

And we did have very good discussions two years in a row now, talking about our integrated supply chain, and how decisions like this can not only impact the producers here in Manitoba, but also those that are in the processing industry in the United States. And we know that the impact has been not only negative on this side of the border, but also negative on the south side of the border, though it's perhaps a protectionist measure that they've included in times of economic uncertainty. Protectionist or not, it actually has had the reverse effect, by impacting some of the processing plants that rely on the fine quality of product that has been shipped from Canada to the United States, as part of that integrated supply chain.

So I think it's very important that we stand united on this matter, that we do talk to our federal government. And I know that my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn), has been having those discussions with Minister Ritz. And it has been mentioned—members opposite have also referred to the fact that former Premier Doer, now the Canadian ambassador to the United States, has been a champion on such causes, not only in his previous role as premier of Manitoba but, certainly, very much aware of the issue and the impact that it's had on our producers, in his role right now as the Canadian ambassador to the United States.

So, again, I'm very pleased that we're having this conversation today. And I think it's important that we do stand united and send that signal to our colleagues that this is not acceptable, and that we have to find a solution that works in the best interests of, not only as I said, producers on this side of the border, but those involved in the processing plants south of the border, as the impact has been considerably negative, Mr. Speaker.

So we know that we have a lot of work to do to get this message out. And we did have a commitment from our friends in the International Legislators Forum that they would look through that lens, each and every time they hear of protectionist measures that are being considered or proposed in the United States—COOL is one of them, Buy American is another—and it has a significant impact on a very integrated supply chain.

We had excellent presentations from people who are affected on both sides of the border. We had excellent presentations from people affiliated with manufacturing here in Manitoba, and those who relied on our imports—our exports, their imports, in the United States.

So I think this is important that we carry on with that discussion at the International Legislators Forum, which again, we had the privilege of hosting at the end of June, here at the Inn at the Forks.

Now we know that trade agreements are very important, we know that. And we know that the World Trade Organization, in ruling against COOL—we know that the Americans have introduced measures that are not going to bring them in compliance. In fact, we feel that it's going to be more detrimental to this particular situation, Mr. Speaker.

So, again, the fact that everyone is standing here in a non-partisan way with a very united voice, this is a matter of urgent public importance and we do need to pursue this and work together to ensure that our voices are heard, and work with our colleagues right across the country, in the ag sectors right across Canada, and work with our federal government to ensure that the United States does not impose these new rules and regulations, and have the unintended consequence that, I think, COOL has originally had in terms of the impact on those that depended on our supply chain in the United States. Just like the unintended consequences of the Buy American and how that impacted companies in the United States.

I know that in one case in a Buy American rule, a company actually had to invest—in the United States, an American company that relied on the integrated Canadian product—because of the rules in their country designed to protect that company, I believe, they had to invest over \$3 million in changes to their particular facility to accommodate products that needed to be manufactured under their new rules in the United States even though their Canadian company and a subsidiary of that particular company

was doing an excellent job in the production of that particular item.

I wish I could remember the name of that company and—but it was presented to us at the International Legislators Forum. Sometimes these measures are brought in and I understand that—that they can be brought in with the best of intentions, in a somewhat of a protectionist environment. And we all know why governments go down that path on occasion when you have situations of economic uncertainty. But we do know that these unintended consequences, perhaps, are something that our American friends need to realize are impacting both sides of the border.

We have seen a lot of good things happening with some of the changes that are being made to facilitate trade between Canada and the United States. We know that Emerson is, I believe, the second-busiest land port in North America as far as the product—or number of goods and services that are crossing that border every single day. We know that every minute in the 10 minutes that I'll be speaking today, we will have traded over \$13 million with the United States in goods and services—just in the time that I am giving my speech today.

So we know how important this particular relationship is, we know that sometimes things that are brought in have unintended consequences and we know that we have to very clear that this is not acceptable to our producers here in Canada. It's not acceptable to our government here in Manitoba or our government in Canada. And we know that the best way to address this is to continue to work with various organizations to lobby our friends and neighbours to the south to work with the International Legislators Forum; to work with our friends at the western legislators forum as well—I—

An Honourable Member: Midwest legislators forum.

Mr. Bjornson: Midwest legislators forum which I have yet to attend, but perhaps there's an opportunity in the not-too-distant future.

But that said, there are a lot of vehicles that we can use to advance our common voice on this very important issue.

So, again, I really appreciate that we have an opportunity to have this conversation and I appreciate and commend the work of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) who has been working with our federal Minister of Agriculture; his

predecessor, the minister of Agriculture, currently sitting as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), as well; and of course his predecessor, who is Minister Wowchuk, who was a champion of our producers through this process.

So it has been a long, frustrating road and I appreciate that. And, unfortunately, we're seeing that the panel ruling through the WTO is not being honoured in the spirit of that ruling. And we know that we have work to do with a united, non-partisan voice to make sure that we can be champions for our producers and that we can have our American friends see the folly of this initiative and that we can get back to what we do best, and that is working together in a North American economy in a very integrated supply chain to ensure that our producers are benefitting north of the border, their processors are benefitting south of the border, and we can get the best agricultural products in the world to the markets without such obstructionist issues as COOL and Buy American.

So I thank you for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and I applaud the members opposite for bringing this to the floor.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I'd like to commend my colleague and the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) for bringing this MUPI forward today. This is terribly important that we deal with this immediately.

And I can say that over the years now, since BSE, that Manitoba producers and Canadian producers have suffered a lot of hardships. And when COOL was introduced in 2002 we started to see that there was going to be a huge effect and started to address that. There was address from many, many different angles. It was addressed provincially, federally by our cattle organization and by our—by Canadian—our national pork organization and Manitoba pork organizations.

* (15:20)

But COOL has impacted the Canadian agriculture sector in a massive way, and since implementation, billions of dollars have been sucked out of the agricultural community, and the reason for dealing with this as quickly as possible, Mr. Speaker, is that tomorrow there's a conference call on a farm bill. And there will be—some of our members will be on that conference call, and I would suggest that this particular country of origin labelling is not on the docket right now to be discussed at the farm bill.

But, obviously, after this announcement today, when we see that it is going to be an additional \$75 to \$90 a head cost to producers in the province or in Canada, and we've also seen the announcement by the federal minister that he is not taking this lying down, that he's actually looking at retaliatory tariffs to offset the losses of Canada and Canadian hog producers and cattle producers, that this will probably force this particular bill to be discussed in a US national farm bill.

It's important that it's done there, and I can say that if it turns out that they continue to go ahead on this path of protectionism, that it will be brought up or I will be part of bringing this up in Vancouver at the SARL meeting along with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) and my colleague from Lakeside as long—as well as some other members from—or other heads of state here in Manitoba or heads of companies. I know that Martin Unrau will be there. I know that one of the shareholders—main shareholders of HYTEK will be there and they will be expressing their concerns as well to the minister and also to our American counterparts who—when we sat in Washington one year ago in January and passed a motion that the United States should comply with the World Trade Organization's recommendations, I think that we will have a group of people there, a group of state legislators there that are certainly sympathetic to our cause here in Canada and in Manitoba in particular, just as they are and recognize what's happening in their country and in their states and in the packing plants there that have been closed because of these types of regulations and because of this type of protectionism.

I'll also be talking to the Midwestern legislative forum later this year at the beginning of July. I have an opportunity to be there and because of the position that I have there I will be bringing this up with them, and I suspect that we will also have some very sympathetic individuals there as well. It's unfortunate to see this nontariff trade barrier that's been thrown up, and I don't—there's no way that I want to apologize for the stance that Canada is taking in this situation, and there's nothing in our trade between Canada and the United States that should have precipitated this type of action by the American government. Nothing should have precipitated this type of action. When we see that our trade minister, Ed Fast, has opened up markets all over the world—he's opened up markets faster after BSE in other parts of the world than we have opened up a free trade with the Americans. I also would like to say

that the Mexican governments have been just as distraught as we have in Canada, and their producers are just as poorly affected by this as we are here in Canada.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we see support in the cattle industry like we have from Mr. George Scott—he is the president of the national cattlemen's association. He's from Wyoming—I believe he's from Wyoming, and it was from that part of the country that R-CALF started to throw up barriers, trade barriers, and here we have the very same people from the same area—or are people from the same area, that are standing up [*inaudible*] to this country of origin labelling. I would suggest that the hurt that it has done to Canada is not irreparable, but it cannot continue to go on the way it has been, and I'm sure that there's not any member in this House that will not support Minister Ritz when he puts up tariffs on whatever other products that he thinks are fitting. And he's said that he's prepared to do that; I'm sure that he has a list of products that will bring attention to this on the American side of the border and from their exporters and producers in United States.

I know that there are other people that want to speak to this today, Mr. Speaker. So with those few words, thank you very much.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): I thank members of the House for the opportunity to put a few thoughts on the record, and I want to begin by thanking the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) for bringing this MUPI forward. He and I have not been getting along all that well in recent times over some unfortunate misquotes that he's been putting on the record, and I'm still waiting for a retraction, but today he and I are united on this front, as are we all, I think it's safe to say, in the House in speaking against this latest action by the United States government. I also want to acknowledge the good works of our Minister of Agriculture, the member for Swan River (Mr. Kostyshyn), and our Premier, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), for the work that he's done, and acknowledge the good works of past members, in particular, the honourable Rosann Wowchuk, former minister of Agriculture, and, obviously, Ambassador Gary Doer, who, as our premier, also fought long and hard on this file over the years.

It is what it is, Mr. Speaker. This is a classic case of protectionism. This is power politics at its worst, I have to say, and it's based on the trade imbalance that Canada has with United States. I think it said we

export almost three quarters of our product produced in Canada into the United States, whereas the Americans depend on our market for maybe 5 per cent, so obviously we need them a lot more than they need us. And we do our utmost to conform to international agreements, and it's just unfortunate that our allies—friends, I'd like to think—south of the border cannot show equal respect to the rule of law, to international law, to the World Trade Organization and other such entities.

I think that it's safe to say that into modern times that the cattle herd in Canada and the United States was a continental herd. There was so much interaction between our two countries that in essence it was one herd of cattle. And that unfortunately has been eroded in recent times, and it goes back, specifically, in my mind, to that date that I will never forget, May the 20th, 2003, when BSE was announced in this country. And, you know, we did the right thing and have always done the right thing in terms of doing our due diligence as regards monitoring our herds, doing the testing to make sure that the product that we produce is the best in the world. And I think we did a much better job than our counterparts to the south. And when it did crop up, unfortunately, in a herd in Alberta we did the right thing and stepped up. And that set off years and years of trade action that was highly politically motivated by groups such as R-CALF that did their utmost to block product coming south by any means possible in order to enhance their marketing position in the United States. It was pure economics for them, and they were very vocal and obviously were successful in convincing their political people to do what they have done. I've always thought that Canadian beef was superior to American beef given their propensity to finish using corn, whereas we're more grass-fed farmers to the north here. So maybe that's what motivated them—that we had that competitive advantage already in terms of quality, so they had to undermine that using other means.

* (15:30)

We've seen this before—obviously, the Canadian Wheat Board, a classic example. I think 17 times the World Trade Organization ruled in our favour, and yet the United States continued to ignore those rulings, cost us billions of dollars. The softwood lumber issue before that was ongoing for a decade or more and, you know, the same scenario where we had the support of the international community, but the Americans were able to ignore those rulings at

their will because of their economic advantage over us.

And that's really the nub of the issue here, and I would hope as we go into the 21st century that we could start truly being more co-operative, that our friends to the south would refocus on a multilateral approach and start playing ball and being a little more fair in how they deal with the international community, especially with the country of Canada, who is, I would say, their staunchest, strongest ally that they could possibly have. We've got an excellent relationship with them. We're, I think, the largest supporter of energy to them, for example, whether it's oil from United States—or from Alberta, excuse me—or hydroelectric power from Manitoba here. They depend on us for energy, which is what drives all economies.

I look to the military as another example. You know, we supported them and the international community in Afghanistan and I would just like to tell a—briefly, a little story. When I was in Washington several years ago when we used to have an exchange program where provincial legislators could go lobbying to the United States, something that was curtailed by the federal government, unfortunately, and I would encourage them to reconsider that. But I had a trip to the Congress building and we went there during the day and it was like trying to get into Fort Knox with metal detectors, with hundreds of soldiers with machine guards—or machine guns—standing around. It was not easy to enter, and I recall Conrad Santos who set off the metal detector no less than a dozen times. He virtually had to disrobe before he finally got into the Congress building. But that same night, Mr. Speaker, I was just wandering around, you know, taking in the sights, and I was wandering around the Capitol building and came around a corner and I noticed a couple of guards were standing by a door having a cigarette. So I went up to talk to them and they asked me where I was from, and I said I was a Canadian, and I could see the change in attitude that they had toward me. It was no longer distrustful. I could see the positive attitude that they had, and they said, would you like to come into the Congress building and maybe go up into the House of Representatives? I said, sure. They said, well, here you go. Just come in this door and walk down this hallway and we'll radio ahead to the guard ahead there and he'll let you in to the chamber, and inside of two minutes I was sitting in the House of Representatives gallery. So easily done, and that was based on the good

relationship that Canada had developed through its participation in the situation in Afghanistan.

So, you know, if any Americans are listening to this or are going to bother reading our speeches here today, I would hope that they would take that to heart, that when it came to even laying down our lives we were there with them in that particular circumstance.

So my final point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to also acknowledge our federal Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Gerry Ritz, in this regard. He is in this case doing the right thing, and I applaud him for that. And I would close my remarks by just making reference to the hardship that the cattle producers in the Interlake have experienced since the flood of 2011, who are still experiencing hardship.

This last season was very difficult for them, and, if Mr. Ritz is listening, I would hope that he would take the opportunity going forward to retract his comments that ranchers in Manitoba wanted to be compensated twice for the same flood, that he would put that behind him and he would recognize that we are still experiencing a hardship as ranchers in the Interlake, and that he would begin to participate fully with the Province of Manitoba in AgriRecovery programs as we try and bridge our producers through to this coming season.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, and it's a pleasure to stand and put a few words on record in support of the issue that's been brought forward by the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler).

This is an important issue for a lot of Manitoba and actually to all Manitobans in the bottom line. Certainly, it—the immediate impact is in the cattle and the hog industry. Both sectors have had a pretty rough time.

Certainly, the cattle industry, since the BSE issue in particular, with—as has been referenced, there's a wide range of trade irritants with the Americans and also with a number of other countries not—most—in most cases, not well justified, because we did handle the issue of BSE probably better than any country in the world ever has. It's been very rare for any country to actually remove or reduce the incident of a disease like this from their basic herd population, and we have, it appears, effectively done that. We certainly haven't had an outbreak in some time, and that's unique in itself.

And in the pork sector, it's—we've had an integrated trade pattern, in terms of shipping animals and killing plants, for many years across North America that impacted not only Canada, but also Mexico as well and the Americans. And to suddenly try and put it—a trade irritant like COOL—in place that actually forced people to keep their products separate and have them identified separate in the marketplace, cost everyone in the market—that is in the market—all three of those countries, a great deal in terms of costs. And, of course, we all know that that eventually gets passed down to the producer, and that has taken a great deal of profit out of the agriculture industry, in particular the red meats industry, and we would certainly want to do our best to try and stop that.

And very often it's unclear to people what is the significance of something like the WTO. Why do we need trade rules? Well, certainly this is a prime example of why you need trade rules. If you do not have a standard—hopefully a world standard or a standard between countries that you can follow—you find people doing arbitrary things that are outside the marketplace that really are intended in some ways to protect their particular portion of the market, but very often there are unintended consequences. I would submit that a lot of the cost actually of the MCOOL has actually been experienced by American consumers as well as Canadian consumers, so that there was a rule of unintended consequences which we often see in trade issues.

And for those of us in Manitoba who think, well, maybe there's a few things here, we certainly had the softwood lumber industry, you think back a number of years, not to this last WTO agreement, but the one before was actually the end of some industries here in Manitoba and some in Winnipeg here, because we did not get what we needed in a trade agreement.

And that would've been the demise of the sugar processing industry and the sugar beet production industry, which was basically killed because of a very minor issue on WTO agreement where we stayed open, in terms of our marketplace, to offshore sugar and the Americans did not. And, of course, sugar began to come into Canada in huge quantities, processed mostly in—at the coasts and moved into the US marketplace. And, of course, very quickly the Americans became resentful of that, because we had one set of rules; they had another set of rules. And so they shut us down—shut us down to the point where we could not even produce for our own domestic consumption. And to this day, we no longer have a

sugar production industry in Canada. We produce about 4 per cent of our domestic needs and depend on the rest of the world for that, even though we were very competitive in the marketplace. But we could not compete with a dumped product from some Third World countries. And that was the implication of having a good set of rules under WTO, so it's absolutely essential that we do that.

And I think, in this case, with the deadline pending tonight and the lack of any real action, we all seem to be in agreement around this House, and certainly we know that the federal government has been very, very supportive on this issue, and Minister Rich has been quite vocal. In fact, they have obviously given some thought to how they might retaliate in regards to this. And it's—it is very shameful that you get into a situation where retaliation in a trade marketplace is the only option that remains open to you, because there will be consequences. And sometimes they're not what you originally intended. It can add costs to consumers, and we certainly don't want to see that take place. It can disrupt markets that have run successfully for many generations and cause great deal of hardship on the production side of things should it turn out to be an agricultural commodity.

* (15:40)

I remember the repercussions when we had a trade dispute with France, and there was talk about shutting down the import of champagne. Not that it ever occurred, but I can tell you the repercussions in the marketplace were dramatic, very quick, and the consumers, of course, were very upset that this might actually happen and that in—that particular wine out of France would be shut down. And that's the type of action that can be taken in terms of retaliation. So we certainly don't want to end up in that position.

So I would certainly encourage this government to give serious consideration to put—issuing a statement expressing their concern for this. We were—we're certainly onside with that; we've already issued a statement as our party, and I think this government has been maybe a little too silent on issue—this issue, especially of late. We know that they do support our producers in regards to this and have expressed their concern about the trade action from the Americans under MCOOL. So I would certainly encourage them to move in that direction.

We know this is costing our producers, and lots of numbers have been tossed out, and some of the earlier speakers mentioned that, too, but in terms of a

beef animal, certainly \$80 to \$100 per animal, and in the pork sector, \$25 to \$40 per animal is probably a minimum cost. That's not counting the impact on the processing side of things. And, as has been mentioned, we have two large exporting pork processors here in Manitoba—one in Brandon, of course, and one in Neepawa—and the implications to them are actually very large. And they have probably suffered in terms of their ability to function in an export marketplace because of the access to quality product and the impact on the production side of things in terms of the numbers.

We know that we've probably lost at least 40 per cent of our pork producers in Manitoba in the last 10 years. Most of them were smaller family farm operations, which was certainly the kind of agriculture we want to encourage, and this has been a major blow. And it's certainly a factor, not the sole factor, in the reduction in numbers because the marketplace has been a tough marketplace to make a dollar in. But when you're struggling to make a dollar and there's uncertainty in the marketplace in terms of regulation, the two things very often combine and push people in a direction of shutting down their production facilities and have them exit the industry, and that certainly hasn't been good for the diversity of Manitoba agriculture.

So, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on record in regards to this, and I know many of my colleagues also want to speak to this issue, so I'll give them the opportunity. Thank you.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): I, too, would like to add my voice to this, and it's good that the House has decided to address this issue today, and we need to send a strong, unified message out of Manitoba to help to back our federal government and another voice to try and bring some reason to the US government.

There's—as has been noted earlier today in this discussion, there's a lot of American producers who are very upset about this ruling by the American government, too, that the US government is not onside with the national cattlemen's association, with the American pork producers, and this has had a really negative impact on the US industry with this WTO COOL legislation, also, because they've effectively shut down the border to a supply to a lot of the US plants.

And I know from personal experience that I used to ship in to a lot of those American plants a number

of years ago, and when COOL came in, that was the end of that. And now a number of those plants are no longer in production because they didn't have the source of product to keep them going.

And we know that the hog industry in Manitoba, it's had its share of tough times in the last number of years, and this COOL legislation has certainly hurt them too. And the weanling production, there was a lot of weanlings that went from here into southern Minnesota and into Iowa, and they're no longer able to do that because of the COOL legislation.

So I think that it's important that we as a House send a strong message to—both to US government and a strong message of support to the Canadian cattlemen's, the Canadian pork producers, and to the Canadian and Mexican governments that this action by the US is just not what we expected of them. There's reasons for the WTO and—as a trade organization to mediate disputes, and the Americans have been told they're wrong on this and yet they don't seem to pay any attention and so this was unfortunate and we need to get this message out to them very strong.

And so I just certainly encourage this House to support this resolution, and let's get the message to all those affected that Manitoba is supporting both the hog and the cattle industries in Manitoba and this is just one small step to help them rebuild and gain some of their former strength. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): I thank the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) for bringing forward this issue today as a matter of urgent public importance. I want to—I know the time grows short. I want to certainly make comment that I think it's imperative that this House and this particular government of the day put forward a strong statement on this. As of today, the federal government has. The cattle producers' associations and various other organizations have. And I think it's very important that this—that our government of Manitoba put forward a statement at least by the end of today.

You know, we've had a really tough go with the—especially the beef industry, but also the hog industry in this province, and extra costs like this are just driving the industry down further. Those are very important industries in this province. They've been the lifeblood of an awful lot of farm families, and they've driven this province. And you know, in all the years that I farmed, I raised hogs, I raised beef, I raised wheat, and we did see tariffs go on at the

border from time to time—on wheat I think there was 11 or 12 of them over a number of years. We were able to win every one of those disputes, but they all had a cost and it was a massive cost and those costs go on.

It's a protectionism ploy that's being played on us. And, as Minister Ritz said today, he will examine all the options, including retaliatory measures, to deal with this situation, and I hope that the provincial government is joining with him in that process and making sure that we do look at all the options, because this is just unacceptable. It's billions of dollars if it continues, and eventually what it does—our industry becomes more decimated and then it twists around and it becomes a cost to the consumer.

So we all have a vested interest in this, because we will be paying more. It's as simple as that. As time goes on, that's where we'll end up. And there's even other side issues to this. As our cattle herd shrinks and more land is broke up and put into crop production or just left idle, there's environmental impacts that will be a side effect of this as we move forward.

And it all goes together in creating a very difficult position for our livestock industries in this province. So, I would urge the provincial government to issue a strong statement on this. And I thank you very much.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I just wanted to put on the record that I also support my colleagues in this and encourage the government to take a strong position against the decision in the United States not to honour the labelling legislation—country of origin labelling. This is the mandatory country of origin labelling that they had put in. It was supposed to end today, Mr. Speaker, and this was the deadline and the Americans haven't honoured it.

* (15:50)

Because of the number of cattle producers that are in my region of southwest Manitoba, and including those who have already left the industry, on their behalf, with the auction mart closings and that sort of thing that have happened in Manitoba as well, I want to acknowledge that I support my colleagues in the—and the effort to reduce this, to take a strong position against the American decision on the country of origin labelling today, and urge them to—the government to take a strong position as well. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on the matter of urgent public importance?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): All right, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say this is a particularly important matter. It is very timely that it's coming up. I think that the government should, at the minimum, express some objections to what's happening, publicly, and I—hopefully, this discussion today will be part of doing that. At the same time, I think that the government should look—I mean, suppose this were to become a permanent situation; now what do we do here to support and help our industry?

I don't like to, you know, even think about that, but I think that if you don't think about that then you can get trapped in a very bad situation and just try to, you know, blame other people and try to get an answer which isn't coming. So we should at least be realistic and sit down with producers and anybody who's got any ideas about what we should do if this—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The one hour allocated for the debate on the matter of urgent public importance has expired, so the debate is terminated.

Now we'll now proceed with the business of the House.

Grievances? Seeing no grievances, we will now proceed to—

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, I'm just standing to table a document. Yesterday, in debate, it was requested from across the floor that I table a document. I wanted to make sure that I had copies of that document. I have—I can assure the members of the House that I now have those copies and it is my pleasure to table this document, this letter, that we referred to yesterday in debate.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable member from Morden-Winkler for tabling the documents that were referenced yesterday and I appreciate his information and advice for the House, and that will conclude the matter. Now, we'll now proceed to government business.

House Business

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on House business. Would you please canvass the House to see if there's

leave that, at 5 o'clock, you interrupt debate and call second readings of the following bills: bills 29, 35, 40, 32, 34, 39, 28, 45, 26, 31 and 44?

Is there further leave that the House would then sit until 6 o'clock or whenever the business I just listed is concluded, whichever comes first?

Lastly, is there leave that while considering these matters after 5 o'clock there be no quorum calls and any recorded votes are deferred?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House that—at 5 o'clock, that the Speaker interrupt the debate and call second readings on the following bills: bills 29, 35, 40, 32, 34, 39, 28, 45, 26, 31 and 44? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Is there further leave of the House, then, to sit until 6 o'clock or whenever the business listed in by the bills I've just indicated has concluded, or whichever comes first? *[Agreed]*

And is there leave that while considering these matters after 5 o'clock there be no quorum calls and any recorded votes be deferred. Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Howard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, would you resume debate on Bill 20?

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Mr. Speaker: We'll now resume debate on Bill 20, The Manitoba Building and Renewal Funding and Fiscal Management Act (Various Acts Amended), sponsored by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers).

Bill 20—The Manitoba Building and Renewal Funding and Fiscal Management Act (Various Acts Amended)

Mr. Speaker: I want to offer my apology to the House. Yesterday, during the debate of the House, there was a motion that was introduced during second reading of the bill. And in reviewing the Hansard proceedings of yesterday's proceedings, I note that during the introduction of what is commonly referred to as the hoist motion, I did not detect an important omission during the reading of the motion compared to the printed version. I should have asked the House that—for leave to consider the motion as was presented to the Speaker in writing and not as was stated on the record.

My apologies to the House for not detecting that omission at that point of time, and I want to ask the

House if there's leave to consider the motion as was printed and presented to the Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no. So, therefore, I must respectfully rule that the motion is not in order, and that we will now return to the main motion of Bill 20, and the debate, I believe, is open, and so the honourable member for Arthur-Virden has the floor.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): It is my privilege to speak to Bill 20 today in the House in regards to the activity that's taken place by this government and the motion that they've put forward to penalize Manitobans in their future endeavours and purchases by bringing in a PST of 1 per cent increase by moving it up to 8 per cent.

I don't know if we're on the way to catching up to Ontario and the \$300-billion debt that the Province of Ontario has alone, Mr. Speaker. You know, they've got a—maybe our per capita debt is actually worse than theirs, and that's why we have to raise the PST to 8 per cent and try and catch up to them.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister would know more about that than we because, of course, he's seen the books. He's much more closely aligned to that than, perhaps, we are and, you know, if he had've told Manitobans what he really needed this money for, they might have been more acceptable of it. But trying to bury it into flood mitigation projects, that sort of thing, some of them 40, 50 years old as has been pointed out, why he tried to convince Manitobans that it was a priority all of a sudden at this late stage of the game, after having spent \$140 billion in 14 years and only spending 0.18 per cent on flood mitigation projects to date. It fell on deaf ears in Manitoba.

We know there's lots of work to do, Mr. Speaker, but many of the projects that they've since come out with are already budgeted projects. They're projects budgeted by this government in previous budgets: schools, daycares, much needed facilities in Manitoba, but already on the books by previous budgets.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's why Manitobans were a bit confused when the Premier (Mr. Selinger) came out and said, well, we have to have this. We have to do it right away. And I've mentioned in this House before that we are in a situation where the

government took people to task for their positions on seeking flood compensation, things like flood compensation, things like bridges and roads that are much needed in the province, some due to the flooding of 2011 as well, but not all. This government had already fallen behind some \$11 billion in investments. It's this—it's the part of the infrastructure that we have in Manitoba. It's part of the debt that we have in this Province that's not even on the books. That infrastructure deficit, whether it's roads, or water and sewer, whether it's schools or other facilities, that's not funded. It's the silent part of the debt that we have in the future.

Now, maybe that's why the Finance Minister, he felt that he was going to try and bring that on to use more of those funds to put into those projects, but there was no consistency, Mr. Speaker. As soon as they found out that they hadn't spent any money in this area, that it wasn't a priority for them over 14 years, then they came up and said, well, you know, we're going to build a school, and we know that they're probably needed. There are other schools that are required, as well, in many areas of the province, other realignments of spending in this province that could do a lot of good if the government would sit down and 'priorize' the projects that they've got and how that they're spending their money. Even they, in their own election platform of 2011, said that a 1 per cent increase—or 1 per cent efficiencies across the board in government would provide them with \$120 million. So, when we decide to do that in other programs, they come out and say that it's impossible to do. Well, you know, if it—it's just consistent with the lies that were given in the 2011 election campaign by the Premier when he indicated, several times, or once at least, that, you know, anybody that thought that they would ever increase the PST, that it would be just nonsense. Well, the nonsense has been found out by what the minister has brought forward in this very budget.

* (16:00)

Mr. Speaker, trying to—you know, Manitobans are a pretty astute group. You know, fool me once, shame on me; fool me two or three times, shame on you, you know or—Mr. Speaker, that's a situation, I guess, where this government has fallen, I think, by the mark. They haven't even taken into consideration the work done by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business who's followed up on this, been telling them for years that their infrastructure shortfall is there, like the Heavy Construction

Association of Manitoba, like the Association of Manitoba Municipalities.

So what did they do? They detracted or distracted, I guess you could say, away from the Association of Manitoba Municipalities by forcing them with some legislation to force their amalgamations, taking their eye off the ball, if you will, and showing them that this is not a priority to fix the infrastructure that has befallen municipalities through—mostly through no fate of their own. And yet, for associations and municipalities and communities, towns and villages working with surrounding rural municipalities, all working together at the present time wasn't good enough for the minister, Mr. Speaker, and this government. So they had to force that amalgamation to bring it forward, and yet we know that there are many priorities.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to go back to the fact that the government brought forward the 1 per cent program with no consultation for Manitobans. In fact, I'm pretty sure there wasn't even consultation with their whole government. Many were surprised that the government had brought this forward. Certainly, citizens of Manitoba were shocked. This was an election promise broken. They voted this party in. All the members—many members of the—were pointed out many members of the government in the backbench and in the Cabinet who were all out knocking on doors in that campaign, and not once did they ever recommend or suggest to people that they would increase the PST by any amount, never mind by \$278 million a year.

And I think that that's—that is a concern of all of the people of Manitoba today. And, Mr. Speaker, as I started out in my comments saying that, you know, the number of things that it could be used for, used for flood mitigation work, that sort of thing. It was also found out that a lot of these projects were 40, 50 years old, like the Holland Dam. It was one of Duff Roblin's fourth projects, behind the floodway—the Red River Floodway around Winnipeg, which we know how valuable that's been. The Shellmouth Dam has held water back to protect the city of Winnipeg and Brandon as well and other communities along the way. It's also was his vision, and they got it built, was the Portage Diversion as well to divert water in times of severe flood levels. But the fourth area was the Holland Dam, and that project and dam on the Assiniboine River north of Holland, Manitoba, and deep valley, and it was never used, never built.

So, it was a bit ironic, Mr. Speaker, that fate would have it that four days before or five days before the budget, the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton) would invite several of—myself and several of my colleagues to his office to review the flood report, the Manitoba 2011 Manitoba flood recovery report that came out, done by Dr. Farlinger, in regards to the processes needed across Manitoba and the overall view of that flood of 2011.

And it was a bit late getting to the minister's desk, and I'll get into that in a moment, but that project had several projects in it that were—added up to a billion dollars. So the member, as I said, from Thompson invited us to his office, and we had a review of that project—of those projects, and a review of all of the flood mitigation requirements that might be there at that time. And it was in his office that he indicated that that project alone—I believe it was my colleague, the member from Lakeside, that indicated that, well, that project, Mr. Minister, would probably cost about \$300 million, if I remember correctly. And the member from Thompson, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, indicated oh, no, it would be much more than that. It would be, like, \$500 million.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that \$500 million is half of the whole value of that report that came out, which didn't come out, by the way, until 10 days before the budget. Now, I had called for it, as Conservation critic, back in January when it didn't come out in December. And I waited patiently and I called again for it with press release in middle of March to see where it was and to let Manitobans know what was in that report and some of the results because—not because I was extremely interested in it—of course, I was—but because there was hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of Manitobans who have not received flood compensation that were waiting to see what was in that report and what kind of protection they could see for themselves in the future, given the fact that the government was so sure that there was going to be a flood this spring and bring it forward.

I mean, the—if I'd think you were—a responsible, accountable government would've tried to get that out as quickly as they could, get it on the record and then try to come up with means of supporting the compensation packages that all of these ministers would've had for the various flood people that were still flooded and needed compensation.

And we find now, Mr. Speaker, that there are still over 500 such people in the province of

Manitoba who have never finalized their flood compensation, and I believe that this is an unprecedented amount. I recall reading parts of Hansard where members of the opposition at that time—the NDP in those days of the—after the '97 flood—were chastising. In fact, I believe former Premier Doer himself was chastising the former government, the former Progressive Conservative government, for not being quick enough to cover the claims, when, in fact, it was only, like, six weeks to two months after the flood. Well, we're two years after the flood now, and we've got over 500 of these claims.

I have several of them in my own constituency: a dairy farmer in particular, Mr. Neil, that is still in a very precarious position financially, Mr. Speaker. And I'm choosing my words very carefully, because it's a much—dire straits would be more of an analogy to describe his situation. And the government, I hope, hasn't turned a blind eye on him yet. He is a struggling dairy farmer, 69 years old, trying to keep his business afloat so his grandchild can take over and have—pass it on to the next generation. And I know the minister has dealt with this, and I'm hoping that there'll be some positive results out of this in the next few days as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say, as well, that that's just one of many. The majority of these people that are still outstanding are around Lake Manitoba itself.

And, of course, it would be a priority to put the one item in that list of items in the flood report that would probably be the priority, I would hope, for the government is the drain out of Lake Manitoba to move a bit more water into Lake St. Martin. The drain out of Lake St. Martin to Lake Winnipeg had to be done first; there's no doubt about that. But there's been nothing done since. Certainly, they were able to lower the gates on the river a little bit—on the Fairford River—to move a bit of water out of Lake Winnipeg—or Lake Manitoba into Lake St. Martin in 2011 in that fall and that summer—or that fall and that winter, actually, after the drain was put in. It was November before it was finished, so through the fall of the winter of '11 and '12 and through that summer.

But, Mr. Speaker, what lowered the water on Lake Manitoba the most was Mother Nature—Mother Nature from the extremely dry spring that we—summer and fall that we had from July 1st on in 2011, as well as another extremely dry year in 2012 in that area. And if you were—asked the ranchers and

the farmers and the people in that area, they'll say that the water went down more because of the dryness in the atmosphere than because of any trench dug from Lake St. Martin to Lake Winnipeg.

In fact, it isn't finished yet either, Mr. Speaker. There's a diversion there that needs to be taken care of so that we can protect First Nations that need to be protected in those areas and have some of those people return to their homes as well.

Mr. Speaker, I want to bring an analogy to the front. This government has—it's something that I have been thinking about for a while in regards to this situation, and I don't think it's been raised in this House yet. We've got a government that right now has a 7 per cent PST. That was before the 2013 budget came down and, you know, they brought one more per cent in that'll supposedly take place on the 1st of July, whether the bill is passed or not, whether they break the law on the 2nd of July or whether they bring closure before that. But the situation is we're—the government wants to—the NDP government, spendDP, want to increase the PST by 1 per cent to 8 per cent, making it 60 per cent higher than Saskatchewan. And, of course, Alberta has zero—no PST in Alberta at all.

* (16:10)

But the kicker in all of this for me is that we raised the PST 1 per cent and we still have a \$518-million deficit. A deficit that's on top of the \$30-billion debt that we have. So where did the other \$2 billion come from in the debt since last year—two and a half? There's no accountability for that in the government at this point, at least they certainly haven't put it forward as a manageable tool in their quiver—in their finances. But I want to bring the analogy, Mr. Speaker, that if we were raising the PST to take care of the deficit that we have in the Province of Manitoba, that if we truly could get back to no deficit—and then just without paying any of the debt down—we would have to find enough PST money to make up for the \$518-million deficit. Well, a 1 per cent PST in their own budget raises \$278 million. So, by pretty simple math, if you were going to eliminate Manitoba's deficit—just to get back to zero, just so our spending balanced with our revenues—you'd have to increase the PST in Manitoba by 1.9 per cent above the 8 per cent that they've already got. So would the NDP really—are they really thinking of raising the PST to 10 per cent—by another 1.9, to 9.9 per cent? Now I've got the Minister of Local Government's (Mr. Lemieux)

attention. Purely, this is just simple math. They would have to raise the PST 1.9 per cent on top of 8 to eliminate their deficit. I don't think there was any foresight put forward in that mismanagement by this government.

So let's go back another year. Let's go back another year. They had a billion-dollar debt in 2012. Well, if we used the same analogy that I just used you'd have to raise the PST another 3.6 per cent to get rid of the debt—the deficit. Pardon me, the deficit—not the debt, the deficit. Now, if you add those two together and even go back to the 7 per cent you've got 12.9 per cent—12.5 per cent.

So why is this important, Mr. Speaker? Well, it's important because this government, in Bill 20, wants to tear up the taxpayer protection part of the balanced budget legislation. They want to tear it up, throw it away, disregard the fact that Manitobans should have a say or a vote in a referendum before any of the PST, personal income tax or corporate taxes are raised in this province as was brought forward by responsible management in 1995—considered to be the best balanced budget legislation in North America at that time. By tearing it up, this government opens themselves up, or allows themselves, the opportunity then to become the open-ended tax province for the NDP—for NDP picking, I guess.

Once removed, there's nothing to stop the government from raising the PST to 12.5 per cent. And that's just to cover their spending, their deficit for the last two years. *[interjection]* So that's—well, my colleague from St. Norbert says there's nothing to stop them from doing that right now. Well, I guess that they could try, but I'm warning Manitobans that without the taxpayer protection part or the referendum part of this act that it is an open-ended tax season for the NDP in the province of Manitoba.

They can raise it as high as they want, and they've already got a Premier (Mr. Selinger) and a Finance Minister—the Premier was the former Finance Minister—and the present Finance Minister who haven't balanced the books in their—any other years there without adding to the deficit and the debt of this province.

And it sort of reminds me of the—of what I watched while I was not in government, under the Pawley government, where the Pawley government would just—from '84 'til '88, it just took the deficit that it had every year and said that it balanced the books by recapitalizing the deficit into debt, Mr.

Speaker. Well, anybody can do that as long as the bank will continue to lend you money.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to my opening comments about who made the minister do this. Now, he's saying he had to do it to—for flood mitigation reasons, to finance these things; he's saying he had to do it to build schools; he had to do it for other reasons, when, in fact, it was much easier—why doesn't he just admit it was much easier for him to reach into Manitobans' pockets and take some more out rather than make the hard decisions on where he had to go?

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's one other thing that could be pushing this government—and I know that the Premier and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) go to New York once, at least, a year, maybe twice a year, they look at the long-term implications of financing for this province. At least I would assume that the Department of Finance looks at that periodically, if not daily. And is it the case that perhaps those who are backing the loans for the Province of Manitoba are telling this government that they have to raise more revenues or cut spending in order to keep the credit rating where it is? I would say that, you know, if I was in government, I'd be very, very hard-pressed to have—I wouldn't have raised the fee ST, but I'd be very hard-pressed to have those kinds of, I guess you could say, anchors tied to me or weights over your head, whichever analogy you want to use, because that's a pretty tough position to put yourself in.

Mr. Speaker, the situation of this government having the New York bankers, perhaps, telling them that they have to borrow more money or get their ship in order, I guess is a better analogy—it's not a good position to be in. Now, we'll have to watch and see if the credit rating does fall but that would not be a good thing for Manitobans, and I think—I'm not sure that the government's being honest with the population in Manitoba by not presenting a true picture to Manitobans.

So I throw that analogy out there that our PST would have to go up another 4 and a half or 5 and a half per cent to cover the deficits that this government's doing. And even if they don't do that, I put this in the record, just to show the mismanagement of this government, how they are not able to manage the situation financially in this province today. Mr. Speaker, they are—and this is coming from a member of the Legislature from Dauphin who is the Finance Minister, who has—

Judge Dewar indicated, had broken the law in regards to the—his breaking of the agreement with the parimutuel arrangement that he had with the Manitoba Jockey Club. This is a very tough situation to be in. I don't know why he would have put himself in this position, but he did.

And he is also one that has tried to break the back of agriculture in Manitoba by bringing in the hog moratorium and chopping the potential benefits for this industry in Manitoba. We're already seeing not enough hogs going into our slaughter plants, particularly in Brandon at Maple Leaf, Mr. Speaker, and we would—I'm sure that they would like to see about another 1,500 or so going in there on a regular basis to help it survive, as well.

Mr. Speaker, there's one other analogy that they're—not analogy—a fact that I'd like to put on the record in speaking today, and that is that when you look at the \$518-million deficit that I've indicated in Manitoba, you would think that the government would do everything in its power to at least control its spending.

And yet reports have come out recently that show that Manitoba's spending addiction is 3.1 per cent—that the growth of spending is 3.1 per cent in this Province with a \$30-billion debt in spite of a \$518-million deficit.

* (16:20)

Responsible management, Mr. Speaker, indicates that you would not spend more than you're making. Well, that would be the case of our neighbour to the west. Saskatchewan has a 20-some-million-dollar surplus, and yet they've only increased their spending by 1.9 per cent. But even with a 1.9 per cent increase in spending as opposed to our 3.1 per cent, Saskatchewan probably can afford to do that, given they have a surplus.

Well, we don't have a surplus. Members across the way maybe don't know this of their government, but there's a \$518-million deficit there as reported in the budget. But they probably didn't know that their spending was still going out of control much higher than the Canadian average.

Mr. Speaker, similar situation in Alberta, but Alberta came in with a bit of a deficit this year as well. But they got it under control. They got it right. Their spending dropped by one tenth of 1 per cent.

At least it dropped a little bit, some recognition that there may have been some financial turmoil in

the province of Alberta. So I'm sure that with the revenues that they have and the management that they can bring to bear that they will come back out of their deficit situation much faster than we will in Manitoba under this NDP government.

And, I guess, I would also say that this NDP government is probably pretty disappointed that their cohorts in BC didn't win the election out there last week. Even in spite of the fact that BC does have some deficit, their spending was nowhere near what it is here in Manitoba either.

And so I think that the financial markets in Canada showed that it was, perhaps, to the benefit of Canada that the Liberals did win in BC. Sort of the anybody-but-NDP party out there, Mr. Speaker. And that was a situation, I think, that Canadians recognized as a plus there as well.

Mr. Speaker, there's a whole host of other areas of concern that I could raise today in the House, and I know that we will be debating this bill for some time. It looks to me as if we could be here all summer talking about why the NDP have failed to respect Manitobans in their ability to choke them with their own vote, chastise them with the lies that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) brought forward during their campaign.

And it's quite convenient that even some of the co-chairs of that campaign have forgotten, conveniently, some of the things that they had for promises in their own campaign in 2011, and particularly the 1 per cent efficiencies that they said they would find at a time when they ended up with a billion dollar deficit.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Premier indicated, as well, that he was on time to raise his, you know, to balance the books in 2014. He was on time, 2014, without any increase in taxes. And he indicated that he was—that he would not raise taxes and that he would do it on time and still balance the books in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleagues will continue to want to speak to this bill and that the Bill 20 is not going to be a good bill for the future of Manitoba, that it's not helping in the development of our province.

So I want to move a hoist motion, Mr. Speaker, on this bill, on Bill 20.

So I want to move, from Arthur-Virden and seconded by the member from Steinbach,

THAT the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "THAT" and substituting the following:

Bill 20, The Manitoba Building and Renewal Funding and Fiscal Management Act (Various Acts Amended), be not now read a second time, but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Arthur-Virden, seconded by the honourable member for Steinbach,

THAT the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "THAT", in quotations, and substituting the following:

That Bill 20, The Manitoba Building and Renewal Funding and Fiscal Management Act (Various Acts Amended), be not now read a second time, but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

It's in order. I just want to make sure I get it right. The honourable member for Steinbach—the motion is in order. *[interjection]* Yes.

And I just want to refresh the memory for all of us in the House, that the honourable member for Steinbach has unlimited time.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): It's a rare thing that a hoist motion is moved on a bill. It's even rarer that it's moved twice, Mr. Speaker, so it's a great opportunity to speak to this. Now, I understand that because of the hiccup that transpired yesterday that it's as though my speech didn't happen, so I want to thank the members opposite for giving me the opportunity to redo my speech and to take a second chance at it.

And so, as I said yesterday in my virtual speech, in my warm-up speech, the hoist motion now brought forward by the member for Arthur-Virden is a great opportunity—it's a great opportunity for the government to have an additional six months to reflect and to think about what it is that they could be doing in those next six months, Mr. Speaker.

And, as I said in the unofficial speech, Mr. Speaker, it is a great—it's not our job, of course, to do favours to the government, to help them, but I think, in many ways, we are. We're assisting them in trying to correct a mistake that they made. And I know that the government members, they underestimated. And I think they would, in a moment of truth, they would say that they've underestimated how much backlash and how much concern they would get from their

own constituents and from Manitobans about raising the PST.

I suspect that they figured, well, last year we raised taxes by \$200 million, Mr. Speaker, and there wasn't a massive outcry from people. People weren't protesting on the steps of the Legislature. So if we do it again, if we increase taxes by another \$250 million through the method of the PST, that we can probably slide this one through as well and people won't be concerned. But they were wrong. I think Manitobans have said, enough is enough. They've had enough. They can't pay any more. They don't believe they should have to pay any more. And they don't believe that this government is using their funds in a way that is fiscally responsible.

And, as I've mentioned in the speech that didn't happen, Mr. Speaker, this is a government who, I think, if you were to talk to Manitobans, ordinary Manitobans, and ask them, do you think that there are other ways that the government could, in fact, find the equivalent of a PST increase, that the vast majority of those Manitobans, perhaps 90 per cent, would say, yes, we do think that there are ways that the government could find the equivalent of the PST by looking internally.

Now, I referenced in the mystical speech yesterday, Mr. Speaker, about the fact that the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) had put out a newsletter or an email, an apologist newsletter or email, that listed off all the various concerns and objections that he was hearing from his constituents. And certainly one of those objections was, couldn't you find a way to save money internally? And, clearly, the member for Wolseley, as well as all the members opposite—I'm sure I've been hearing it—are getting that exact message from Manitobans, where Manitobans are saying, well, we think that there are ways that you could find those savings internally. Have you done everything first within your own house to try to clean up your own financial house?

* (16:30)

And I heard yesterday in the virtual speech, Mr. Speaker, one of the members opposite talking about how, well, it would be magic; it would be magical to try to find this amount of savings. And, as I said then, it wouldn't be magic at all. You could look, for example, at the vote tax. We've got a government, NDP members, who are all taking 700—or \$7,500 out of the provincial Treasury because they're too lazy to go and raise their own money. They don't want to or they're not able to go their constituents or their

supporters or others in Manitoba and say, will you support us? Will you support our party based on our ideas and our beliefs? They won't do that so they brought in a vote tax. Now, maybe members—maybe the new members won't all remember the history of the vote tax, but it was quite a contentious issue here when it was brought in a number of years ago. In fact, we sat through committee through the night. Many of the members who are on our side of the House joined me in committee as we sat through the night, often from midnight till 8 in the morning. Members were drinking Red Bull and different sorts of things, energy drinks to keep them awake. I still have that stock of Red Bull. I think I'll be using it for committee hearings coming up, Mr. Speaker, but we had a very strong pushback not only from our caucus but from members of the public who came to committee who were concerned about the vote tax.

Now, ultimately, Mr. Speaker, the legislation passed, but the government was shamed into not taking the vote tax for a number of years. Now they decided to come up with a new scheme to try to get their hands on the money. They appointed somebody to talk—or to look at the vote tax, but didn't actually give them the ability to recommend not having another level of subsidy, and I think all of us agree—or I—members on this side of the House agree there are enough political subsidies already. Only the NDP are looking for more, but they didn't give that commissioner the ability to say, no, I don't think there should be any additional subsidies. They made him come back with a recommendation on additional political party subsidy. So that truly wasn't an independent report in that sense.

So that is one way the government could save money as a starting point, Mr. Speaker. I also noted in the speech that didn't happen yesterday that, in fact, the government could look at the 58th MLA, Bonnie Korzeniowski, who they somehow came up with an arrangement with to provide her with essentially the same job she had as an elected official when she retired.

Even though I don't want to promote any members on the opposition benches, I imagine that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) didn't think that there were any MLAs who were competent enough to take over the envoy position for the military. He didn't have enough confidence in any of the members opposite, and I think that's disappointing. I'm not suggesting I would have any more confidence, but he is their leader and you would think that of all the backbenchers that they have that don't hold Cabinet

roles, that he would find a one who might be capable for that particular position. But, in fact, he didn't and so he decided to appoint somebody who had already had the job as an elected official after they left politics and to take that out of the treasury.

So members can't with any legitimacy stand up and say that there aren't ways that they could save money within the system, and those are only a couple, Mr. Speaker. But members of the public look at those as symbolic. They symbolically look at those particular examples and they say, well, if those examples exist, then there must be other examples that exist. If the government isn't willing to do away with an unnecessary vote tax, then there must be other things that are equally unnecessary that they also aren't willing to do away with. If the government is unwilling to not appoint somebody to a government-funded position that could have been done by an existing MLA, then there must be other things that the government isn't willing to do to save money. And so it's no wonder that the vast majority of Manitobans would say, we think there are other things that you could have done other than raise the PST.

And that's a great deal of the reason why the members opposite are getting the kind of push back from the public that they are on this issue, Mr. Speaker. It's why so many people came to the steps of the Legislature to protest the PST increase—more than 500, because those members opposite went door to door promising individual Manitobans that they wouldn't be raising taxes. They promised them that they wouldn't be raising the PST or any other taxes. In fact, I think the Premier referred to it as nonsense that they would even consider raising the PST, so as individual members, whether it's the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) or Fort Garry, went door to door in the last election and made that promise.

Now Manitobans came to our door. They came to the door of the Legislature and said, we want you to reconsider. We want you to actually keep the promise that you made to us during the 2011 election, and I wish that members opposite, any of the members opposite, would have come out to the front steps of the Legislature and heard those Manitobans make their case in terms of why there should be a referendum and why there shouldn't be a PST increase. But none of them would that, Mr. Speaker.

It turned out we had a vote that afternoon and so members were here until about 10 minutes before the

rally officially started, Mr. Speaker. It's not as though they couldn't have taken 10 minutes to walk out the front door and talk to a couple Manitobans—Manitobans who deserve to have a voice to their elected representatives.

The Minister of Finance's (Mr. Struthers) office—it actually overlooked the rally. The Premier's (Mr. Selinger) office overlooked the front of the Legislature, overlooked the 500 people who were there protesting on that day. And yet none of them—none of them came out.

And I don't know, maybe the Minister of Finance and maybe the Premier peaked behind the curtains, Mr. Speaker—they pulled back the curtain and looked around to see what was happening in the front steps of the Legislature. We know that there were some pictures taken of a shadowy figure who was pulling back the curtains in the Minister of Finance's office and looking at the rally, but—and then quickly shut the window so he wouldn't have to hear the disturbance.

And you know that's symbolic, Mr. Speaker; it's symbolic of a government that's not willing to listen. Only at election time did they go around and say that this is something that they were going to do or not do. They feigned to be listening to Manitobans then, they went to their doorsteps, they asked that people would open their doors and so they could have a few minutes of their time.

And yet, when the Manitobans came here to the Legislature, none of those members opposite—not one of them, not a minister or a backbencher had 10 minutes—had 10 minutes to walk outside the door and talk to a few Manitobans.

Now, I understand they might not have agreed with those Manitobans; they might not have agreed with their protest on the PST. But, you know, you don't always end up going to places where people agree with you. Often you have to go places where people don't agree with you, Mr. Speaker.

I remember back many years ago, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to go to an event with the former Minister of Agriculture Harry Enns. And I was driving with then-Minister Enns to an event in Selkirk—it was a rally of sorts. And they—it was a rally that people were there concerned about a particular issue that the Minister of Agriculture was doing at the time.

And as we drove to Selkirk—and it was at the arena; it was a huge event, Mr. Speaker—I remember

saying to the minister as we drove to Selkirk, I mean, this is going to be a difficult evening for you, isn't it? It must be pretty tough to go into such a big crowd and to have so many people who you know are going to be upset about the decision you're making.

And he said to me, and he—I had sort of a way of imparting wisdom, he said, well, you know, that's my responsibility; that's my job. I know that people aren't going to approve of what I'm doing but it's our government's policy and it's my responsibility to go there and tell them why I think this is the right thing to do. And he honestly believed it was the right thing to do.

And he had the response—he believed that it was his responsibility, as a minister, to go there and to represent the government on that, Mr. Speaker. And I know the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), I think, remembers the meeting regarding dual marketing and doing away with dual marketing.

And I always respected the minister, as I watched him that evening, and we drove back, of course, together, and it reminded me that even though people aren't people aren't always going to agree with you, that it's important to actually do what—to go there and represent people in terms of what you are going to do so that they have an opportunity to communicate with you.

And it's one of the criticisms that I've had of this government when they brought in the moratorium on the hog industry—I was disappointed that the then-Agriculture minister didn't do the same thing. That he sent out officials from his department—and I'll leave this as a word of advice for the current Ag Minister—that even though you might be doing things that your—the people who are affected by your ministry aren't approving of and you might be going to some contentious meetings, it's your job to do that.

And I always remember Harry Enns and I respect him, not just for that reason, but particularly for that reason. I remember that drive there and back and I took that as a lesson. That it is our job to go and to communicate with people even though we might disagree at the end of the day.

And so I was disappointed that members opposite didn't come out and listen to people—they didn't have to necessarily agree with them. But it is their job to come and listen, so that was certainly a disappointment, Mr. Speaker.

So this hoist motion that's now been brought forward by the member for Arthur-Virden will give

the government an additional six months—will give them an additional six months to listen.

And as I mentioned yesterday in the speech that didn't officially happen, Mr. Speaker, that there is an opportunity for the government now to have not prebudget consultation meetings, but postbudget consultation meetings, and they could travel the province and listen to people, because in the prebudget meetings that they had what we know is that they didn't really give the straight goods to the people who were at those prebudget consultation meetings.

* (16:40)

And I'm critical of the government for the way that they invited people, the way that they invited people to those prebudget consultation meetings. They were very limited in scope in terms of their invitation. You had to register; it's difficult to actually be part of those prebudget consultation meetings. There's sort of an invite list, a target list of people to invite to the meeting. And they specifically, when they had the meetings and they had the prebudget consultation meetings, didn't include all of the information. They didn't provide all of the information for those individual members who were there.

In fact, they had slides that said that there was a strong and stable economy at those prebudget consultation meetings. And yet, only a few weeks later, they came into this House and tried to convince Manitobans that the sky was falling economically in Manitoba and around the world. I mean, what a dichotomy. On the one hand, you go out to different meetings and you tell people, oh, things are going really, really well. You don't mention anything about the PST tax increase. I mean, why would you? Why would there even be a spectre of a PST tax increase if this economy was going so well and was so stable? Nobody would even think of raising the issue in the context of a prebudget meeting, because nothing in the government's information that they presented to those Manitobans would've led them to believe that it was even a possibility.

And yet, I think, in many ways, there was sort of two sets of prebudget consultation meetings. There was the information that was provided to the public, and then there was all the other information that the government refused to provide to—the real goods to the public, Mr. Speaker.

And so this is an opportunity now for the government to hit the reset button over the next six

months. They'll have an opportunity, if they agree to this motion, over the next six months to travel around Manitoba to the different constituencies. They can hold a meeting in the riding for the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) or the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

I would welcome them to come to my constituency. I know that they've only held one prebudget meeting. I admit they only had one prebudget meeting in 11 years or 12 years. *[interjection]* Well, that's true I think. The member for Minto indicates that there was a particular opening that I was unavailable for, and you know that happens sometimes. We all lead busy lives and that was certainly—you can't always make everything, but you do your best.

But, on the topic of prebudget consultation meetings, Mr. Speaker, I know that there's been only one in 11 or 12 years in the constituency of Steinbach, and you wonder why that is because it is one of the most successful regions of the province. The government doesn't mind standing up and bragging about good things that are happening in Steinbach, and yet, they don't want to listen to people. They don't actually want to listen to those people. So this is an opportunity over the next six months for the government to come out and have these postbudget meetings and talk about the PST, to talk about what impact this PST increase is actually going to have on ordinary Manitobans.

And I venture to say, Mr. Speaker, that, in fact, they would do far better in terms of attendance at these postbudget meetings over the next six months if they approve the motion by the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) than they did in terms of attendance on those prebudget meetings. I suspect they'd get hundreds of Manitobans who would come out to these meetings to talk about the PST. I suspect no matter which riding you went to you would get hundreds of people who would come and want to talk about the PST increase.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And so the government should take a look at this as an opportunity, not as—in fact, I said yesterday in attempt number one that they should look at it as a friendly amendment, Mr. Speaker, not to look at it as a hostile amendment, but it's a friendly amendment. The member for Arthur-Virden is in fact doing them a favour by bringing forward this motion. He's doing them a favour by saying, you know, you're in a tough spot. The public is upset at you. The public's

concerned about what it is that you're doing. People are rallying at the front of the Legislature. They're bringing forward petitions—189, I think, as of this afternoon had registered for committee. So here's a way out for you.

And I applaud the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) for trying to do the dirty work, in many ways, for the government, and help them out of a difficult situation. It's not our job as opposition, necessarily, to help the government out of a tough bind, but I think this is the charitable thing for the member for Arthur-Virden to do, because, as I mentioned yesterday in the nonexistent speech, that the Finance Minister, I think, is sometimes going back to his office at the end of the day, and he puts his head in his hands, Mr. Acting Speaker, and he doesn't know how to get out of this situation. He doesn't know how to get out of this bind that he's put himself in, or that the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) put him in, or that they've collectively put themselves in.

Well, this is an olive branch. This is a lifeline that's been thrown to them by the member for Arthur-Virden. He's saying to them, let me help you out. You know, knock, knock, I'm here to help; it's the member for Arthur-Virden. He's saying, I'm giving you an opportunity to take six months to figure this out, six months to realize that you've made a mistake.

And the members opposite would hear from many Manitobans over those six months. They'd hear from Manitobans who are saying, well, this was not what you talked about in prebudget consultation meetings. You never talked about this anywhere else. And now, suddenly, you drop it upon us, Mr. Acting Speaker. And, I think, people would give out an even clearer message to the government than they're already getting that the PST increase shouldn't be on the table, that it should be off the table, that the government needs to look internally first at what they can do to save money within their own house before they go to the houses of Manitobans and ask them to give up more money. And I don't think we should ever forget that, ultimately, that is what's happening. Manitobans are going to have to pay more.

Now, this government disputes their own numbers in their budget. They dispute their own numbers within their—contained within their own budget documents that would show that an average Manitoba family of four, over a couple of years, would be paying \$1,600 more because of the tax

increases brought on by this government since the last election. I know they don't believe the numbers in their own budget, and I'm not surprised they don't believe the numbers in their own budget because of what's gone on with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers)—Minister of Finance who's been hauled before court, who's been found to be in violation of the law by Justice Dewar.

I would—I mean, of course, they've lost confidence in them, and they don't believe the numbers that are within his budget. So I think, in that way, we are of one accord with the government, that we also don't have confidence in the Minister of Finance's numbers. But we are using his numbers when we show that it's \$1,600 for the average family of four. So let's not forget who's paying for this.

Let's not forget that there are going to be hard-working Manitobans, who might live in the city of Gimli, who might be living in the city of Selkirk, who might be in Seine River or Southdale or St. Vital, and they're going to have to make decisions. They're going to have to sit around the kitchen table or in the living room or out on the patio, and they're going to have to say, well, we're paying more. So how are we going to pay for this? Government, the NDP, have brought in a PST increase. We're already sort of tight, barely able, maybe, to make ends meet, because that's often the reality for many families.

That's just how things are these days. It's difficult sometimes to be able to make ends meet or to have a little bit left over, and so they've got to make decisions. Are we going to cancel the family vacation? Maybe we can't afford to go away camping, like we wanted to, with the kids. Maybe they're not going to be able to enrol their kids in hockey or in baseball or in music. Those are the kind of hard decisions that real Manitobans will have to make because this government isn't willing to make decisions on their own.

They aren't willing around the Cabinet table to make the very decisions that they're now asking Manitobans to make around the kitchen table. And that is the challenge that this government is facing. And that is why they're getting so much resistance to the PST increase, Mr. Acting Speaker, because Manitobans understand. Manitobans understand that it's not fair. It's unfair for the government to knock on the doors of Manitobans and ask them to pay more, the very doors that they knocked on during the 2011 election and said: Don't worry, we're not going to raise your taxes. We're not going to increase fees.

What the Tories are saying is incorrect. I saw some of the literature that was sent out.

They knocked on those doors, Mr. Speaker, and made that promise, but now they're knocking on those same doors figuratively. I don't think they have the courage to actually go back to those doors, and saying to people: We need the money; we need the PST increase. And people understand government doesn't necessarily—they're not short of revenue. They don't have a revenue problem. They have a spending problem. They understand that the spendP doesn't know how to get their own fiscal house in order.

And so that's why they're getting the phone calls. That's why they're getting the emails, Mr. Speaker. I see some members looking at their Blackberrys now. I'm sure they're getting more emails, even as we speak, from Manitobans who are concerned, who are emailing and saying reconsider. Don't make this decision. There's a better way.

* (16:50)

And so the motion by the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) opens the door. It gives the government the opportunity—he's done them a favour; he's done something for them that they couldn't do themselves—he's figured a way out of this situation for them. It allows them, in some ways, I suppose, to save a little bit of face. They can go out to Manitobans and they can say: We're sorry; we made a mistake. And, as I mentioned yesterday, Mr. Speaker, in the virtual speech, that when you say you're sorry sometimes people will give you a lot of credit. They'll actually say, you know, we appreciate that.

Now, they might still feel—have a little hard feelings about how things came about, but Manitobans are pretty charitable people, not just financially, I think, charitable, but they are individually charitable in terms of how they treat people. And I think that they would appreciate the fact that the government came out and they said: We're sorry. We didn't expect that it would be so problematic. We realize now that we shouldn't be charging you more, that we need to look internally.

So that is what the member's motion allows the government members to do. I know, Mr. Speaker, I have the opportunity to spend some time in Dawson Trail because it's nearby the constituency that I live in, and I've got a lot of friends in Dawson Trail. And many of them who may not have been supporters of

our party in the last election feel betrayed. They feel betrayed by the government. They've written to me and they've said, well, we don't necessarily think we can email the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux) because he's not going to listen, he's part of the party that's bringing in the PST increase. But they're emailing me about those concerns. They feel that they've lost confidence in the member for Dawson Trail and they've lost confidence in the government overall. I'm sure that the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) has the same sort of experience from constituents who feel that there's been a loss of confidence in the government.

Well, this is an opportunity, through the hoist motion, for the government to have another six months so that the member for Dawson Trail can try to reconnect with his constituents, with the people who voted for him and with the people that he represents. It's six months for them to be able to go out to those constituents, apologize, and say: You know, we're sorry. We shouldn't have done this. We made a mistake. We're going to rewrite the budget. We're going to sharpen our pencils. We'll do away with the vote tax. We'll do away with the 58th MLA. We'll find those internal savings. And I think that Manitobans would generally give the government some credit.

I notice the member for Dawson Trail had the opportunity to read his budget summary not too long ago, and it was in the Carillon, a fine newspaper that he has the opportunity to write articles in, and I do, and the member for Parliament, Mr. Toews, has the opportunity. And I read the article on the budget highlights—it was called Budget highlights—by the member for Dawson Trail, and because I didn't see a lot of budget highlights I was interested to see what it would be, because I wanted to—you know, I'm open-minded, and I thought well, maybe I missed something, you know, in the budget speech. So I read the member for Dawson Trail, his article, and I'm going through it and nothing about the PST, nothing about doing away with the referendum, no nothing about the PST, nothing about the referendum. And I got to the end of the article where it says: I'm happy to hear from you. Please contact me at my constituency office.

And there was nothing at all about the PST increase. It was like poof—it didn't happen. You know, it was like—[interjection]—well, you know, the member from—the member opposite, the member for Dawson Trail says he can make mistakes. Now, this is—now maybe we're making progress. Now I feel

that, you know, at hour two or hour two and a half of this address, including the part that didn't really happen, and now the new part, that maybe I'm making progress with the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux) because he says: You know, maybe there was a mistake. So he has an opportunity, and he gets to write a weekly column. He can write sort of a revised version and include the fact that there was this PST increase.

But I think really, Mr. Speaker, you know the member for Dawson Trail—he's—he's—he's a smart guy, and I'll give him that. He's not without intelligence. And I think it was actually purposeful—I think it was actually purposeful that he left out mention of the PST increase because he knows how contentious it is within his constituency. He knows that at the gas bar in Lorette, or he knows that at the restaurants in Ste. Anne, that they are concerned about this, that this is going to have an impact on their business. He knows that, and he doesn't want to unnecessarily highlight it and bring attention to it, not unlike the advertisements that the government overall is running on television and on the radio and in the newspapers, completely ignoring the fact that there was a PST increase.

And, you know, in many ways I think they've done themselves a disservice, because by ignoring the obvious—and everybody knows it's obvious that they want to increase the PST, they're actually highlighting it. I can't tell you how many people came—have come up to me and said, I can't believe the government doesn't even mention the PST increase in those phony ads. So by trying to actually hide the fact that they're increasing the PST, they're actually highlighting it. They're doing a disservice.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

And so, again, here is an opportunity with this new hoist motion, Mr. Speaker, for the government to take the next six months and to correct itself. To go to the Manitobans and, you know, maybe they have a different view, maybe they'll want to go and try to sell this to Manitobans over the next six months. And if they do—if they want to do that that's certainly their choice and we give them the opportunity to do that, and they can go out to the different places in Manitoba and try and sell that.

Now I know they're all anxiously ready to pack up and head to Brandon for their convention so they can be among like-minded individuals, but they're going to have to reach beyond those like-minded individuals who actually feel somewhat different,

who actually feel that what the government is doing isn't the right thing to do. And I suspect even within the confines of the NDP convention, if you could get truth serum pumped in there, you would find many of the delegates who, in fact, would have a problem with the PST increase. Who would, if they were able to speak freely without threat of reprisal, would say that it's not the right thing to do, that there's a better way to do things than that.

But I don't expect they're going to hear a lot of that because of the nature of their conventions, Mr. Speaker. I know that most people will be patting them on the back and not wanting to cause any sort of a kerfuffle or any sort of division, and so they'll come out of there emboldened. But I would imagine that it would serve the members well if they sort of went a little bit beyond the convention, whether that's in Brandon or other places, to talk to real Manitobans about how they feel about the PST increase. You can dodge the protest. You can try to hoist or hunker down in a convention and not talk to Manitobans but, you know—[*interjection*] I hear comments from the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), the member for mandatory voting, you know, who's going to force Manitobans to vote.

And I can't—I still can't—it's been two days now since I saw the resolution from the constituency association for Elmwood, and I still can't square up the discrepancy between the member for Elmwood who wants to force everybody to vote and the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), the Premier, who doesn't want to allow anybody to vote. And I don't know how they're going to square that up on the convention floor, if they're going to be able to talk to each other, how it is that they're going to—how they're going to reconcile that. I'm sure they'll have some awkward moments in the convention, but I would ask the member for Elmwood, if he's so concerned about voting and if he's so concerned about declining voting, that he go to the Premier and he say to him one of the greatest threats to our democracy is the fact that people don't necessarily want to vote because they're discouraged and this further discourages them.

Doing away with the referendum that right now is in law is a discouraging factor for individuals when they think about politics. It's not going to encourage them necessarily to vote in the next election. We might get more people who vote in the next election who want to speak out against this government and what they've done on the referendum, but certainly it doesn't do the member well to be in a government—

and I know he's been in different caucuses a lot in the last few years—but it doesn't do him well to be in this particular caucus that's doing away with the referendum. It doesn't make a lot of sense. So maybe he will, when he's speaking to his—because I know that there's no official resolution on doing away with the referendum, but the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), in his speech, when he's trying to force mandatory voting on Manitobans, that he can speak to the issue of doing away with the referendum. Maybe he'll get support from the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) or other members of the caucus who will say, you're right, you know, it doesn't make a lot of sense to have mandatory voting on one hand and on the other hand we're doing away with an ability for people to vote, Mr. Speaker.

So I don't have great hope about what's going to come out of the NDP convention on the weekend, but I'm always hopeful even though I don't have great hope, I'm always hopeful, and so I might be corrected on Monday and I'll have a few more hours to speak on Monday and Tuesday, I suppose, and so maybe, Mr. Speaker—

* (17:00)

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

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Steinbach will have unlimited time.

SECOND READINGS

Mr. Speaker: The hour, as previously agreed—the hour being 5 p.m., as previously agreed, we'll now move on to second readings of bills as previously announced, starting with Bill 29, The Land Surveyors and Related Amendments Act.

Bill 29—The Land Surveyors and Related Amendments Act

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing and Community Development (Ms. Irvin-Ross), that Bill 29, The Land Surveyors and Related Amendments Act, now be read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Rondeau: I'm pleased to speak on Bill 29, the land surveyors act. The land surveyors protect the public by ensuring that property boundaries and buildings are located correctly, but new subdivisions,

highways cannot be established without these important people.

This is a proposed new governing statute for the profession of land surveying. The current governing statute is outdated and dates back to 1891. The bill is based on recent models in Manitoba legislation regarding professional bodies. The bill continues the self-governance of the land surveyor profession and provides a modern model for the operation in the Association of Manitoba Land Surveyors.

The association will operate through a governing board called the council, which will work with the registrar to govern the association. One third of its members will be public representatives. These public representatives will be people who are not, and never have been, land surveyors.

As a self-governing profession, the association will work in the public interest by governing the admission to the profession, education, administration. Admission standards will be established. A code of ethics for the profession must also be established. A two-step process established to deal with concerns about land surveyors.

A committee will be established to investigate complaints about the conduct or work done by land surveyors. At least one third of the members of this committee must be public representatives. A complaints committee may deal with matters on an informal basis, both before and after it conducts an investigation. The Manitoba land surveyors are required to co-operate with an investigation and provide records.

Serious matters which cannot be resolved informally will be referred to an inquiry committee. A least one third of the members of the inquiry committee must be public representatives. A panel will be selected from the members of the inquiry committee and will conduct hearings into the complaint and provide the member with the opportunity to respond to any complaint. Normally, these hearings are open to the public. The inquiry committee panel may reprimand, suspend or impose conditions on the practice or cancel a member's registration or licence. This decision may be appealed to the Court of Appeal.

In addition to establishing governance, discipline and processes, this bill allows for the professional incorporation of land surveyors' practice. All voting shares must be owned by land surveyor. And only a land—Manitoba land surveyor can be a director or president of the corporation.

Manitoba members of Manitoba Land Surveyors may own also non-voting shares. Professional incorporation does not limit or remove the land surveyors' professional liability.

The model of professional incorporation is used in a number of Manitoba statutes which permit incorporation of a [*inaudible*] practice.

Mr. Speaker, with these brief comments, I am pleased to recommend this bill for consideration and look forward to its quick passage.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I move, seconded by the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We will now proceed to Bill 35, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Compliance and Enforcement Measures).

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 Finance (Mr. Struthers), that The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Compliance and Enforcement Measures) now be read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, this bill continues the commitment the government has made in its five-year consumer protection plan for stronger enforcement provisions to ensure consumers are protected and all business compete on the same level. The purpose of this bill is to clarify the authority of the Consumer Protection Office and streamline and standardize the compliance and enforcement provisions of the act.

Mr. Speaker, various amendments have been made to The Consumer Protection Act over the years to keep pace with new products, services and business practices in the marketplace. Some of the amendments introduced new compliance or enforcement approaches that have proven effective; however, in some cases, the enforcement provisions were only applicable to a new part of the act and not an act as the whole.

Mr. Speaker, this bill proposes to apply these provisions on a broader basis to support more effective enforcement on the overall act. The bill also clarifies the duties to the director of the Consumer

Protection Office to support, be effective and efficient administration and enforcement of The Consumer Protection Act. In particular, the bill amends the authority of the Consumer Protection Office under the act to conduct inspections, to determine compliance with the act and a licence or an order.

Authority will no longer be limited to situations where there has been a complaint. For example, if information of the concern about potential non-compliance by a business is raised in the media, the Consumer Protection Office will be able to follow up. This broadened authority is consistent with the consumer protection legislation in other parts of Canada and it's needed to ensure the integrity of our marketplace.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will consolidate compliance and enforcement provisions throughout the act into one part so that they apply in generally. These provisions address request of records or information from the business, inspecting the business, and issuing compliance orders to business in breach of the legislation.

The bill provides authority to consumer service officers to obtain information from a business and-or inspect the business to determine compliance within the act. This authority already exists in the act in regards to payday lending but will now apply more broadly. It is also important to recognize these provisions are common to consumer protection legislation in other provinces. For clarity, Mr. Speaker, despite this broadening authority, consumer service officers will be required to obtain a warrant to conduct an inspection or to obtain records from a business that has refused them access.

The Consumer Protection Office will also be able to issue orders for the payment of costs related to inspection or practice review such as the cost to obtain a warrant. These orders are limited to payday lenders, direct sellers and credit granters; however, other persons may be prescribed by regulation. Regulation-making powers have been included relating to service of the compliance and the cost orders, as well as record keeping.

Mr. Speaker, this bill also introduces several new provisions. The director will now be able to apply to the court for order of compliance when a person does not comply with an order issued by the director. The director will also be able to apply for an injunction. Appeal provisions have been included in the bill for the businesses that have been issued

compliance orders by the consumer protection officer of the courts.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will differentiate between individuals and corporations with respect to administration penalties. The current maximum administrative penalty under the act is \$5,000 for individuals and corporations. The bill proposes to increase the maximum administration penalty for corporations to \$20,000. Regulatory authority is provided to establish classes for administrative penalties.

Most businesses operate within the law and treat consumers friendly. It is important for the Consumer Protection Office to have a range in enforcement options to deal with those business that do not comply with The Consumer Protection Act. These amendments are good for consumers, good for business and I urge all members of the House to support this bill that helps to further develop a fair and prosperous marketplace within our province. Thank you.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Mr. Speaker, I move, second by the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed with Bill 40, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act.

Bill 40—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs): I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), that this bill, that Bill 40, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, now be read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, amendments are proposed to The Residential Tenancies Act as a part of a package of changes aimed at responding to the needs of tenants and landlords. Most landlords who undertake renovations do so in a way that treats tenants fairly. In cases where renovations cannot be made without the tenant in occupancy, landlords are required to pay for the tenant's reasonable moving costs up to \$500.

* (17:10)

Unfortunately, there are some cases where landlords carry out renovations in a way that

maximize inconvenience and with the expectation or the intention to cause the tenant to move. In these circumstances proposed amendments would deem these landlords to have terminated the tenancy through their actions. Landlords would be required to pay the tenant's moving costs and the greater of one month's rent and any increased rent and tenant services charges that the tenant is required to pay for up to 12 months.

Provisions allowing the landlord to collect pet damage deposits were introduced in 2000. We've seen more landlords who are allowing tenants—sorry—to allow pets as a result of this change; however, tenants say that more units allow pets are needed. The proposed amendment would allow up to one month's rent to be collected as a damage deposit for pets. This measure's been undertaken to encourage more landlords to allow pets in rental units.

Mr. Speaker, activities that take place when the rental unit or a residential complex can impact others in the building. An amendment is proposed to give landlords the right to terminate tenancy for tenants or others that they permit in the building and engage in illegal activities within the residential complex that interfere with the enjoyment of the rental unit or a complex or adversely affects the security or safety of other tenants or landlords or cause damage.

An amendment is proposed to reduce the appeal period for orders of possession from seven days to five days. Most of the orders of possession are issued because there's been a default of an obligation under the act of tenancy agreement. Reducing the appeal period would ensure that orders would come—become enforceable sooner and matters are appealed, could be scheduled for a hearing more quickly.

Tenants and landlords who disagree with the decision have the right to appeal in most decisions and orders. Unfortunately, some individuals use the appeal mechanism as a way to delay enforcement orders. To prevent this type of abuse, leave will be required to appeal certain Residential Tenancies Branch orders on—to the commission where the person did not take part in the hearing at the branch. Leave would be required to appeal an order of possession for nonpayment of rent if the person did not take part in the Residential Tenancies Branch hearing.

Some individuals who appeal these orders do so as a stalling tactic to delay moving. The proposed amendments would establish grounds for appeal on these types of orders of possession. People will need

to provide information to show that leave is warranted in the circumstances. This new process is intended to be expeditious and eliminate appeals that have no basis.

The regulation-making authority with respect to the annual rent increase guidelines will provide for the method setting the guideline to be set out in regulations. The change will make a more transparent process for landlords and tenants.

There will also be regulation changes forthcoming that will address rent increases resulting from renovations for tenants in units subject to rent regulation and *[inaudible]* or treatment of tenants during rehabilitation.

I highly recommend these to the House and look forward to their quick passage.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I move, seconded by the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed with Bill 32, The Manitoba Institute of the Purchasing Management Association of Canada Amendment Act.

**Bill 32—The Manitoba Institute of the
Purchasing Management Association of
Canada Amendment Act**

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services and Labour (Ms. Howard), that Bill 32, The Manitoba Institute of the Purchasing Management Association of Canada Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to Bill 32, the Manitoba institute of purchasing and management association of Canada amendment act. The Manitoba institute governs the qualifications and registration of certified professional purchasers in Manitoba. There are currently almost 300 members in Manitoba. In June 2009, the Purchasing Management Association of Canada, the national body, approved the replacement of the designation of certified professional purchaser with 'supply'—supply chain management professional to better reflect the evolution of their members' practice

beyond procurement to include transportation and logistics operations management. This accreditation is already in use and recognized in the USA and the UK and is now recognized elsewhere in Canada.

Manitoba is part of the global economy, and that is epitomized no more so by the work of professional purchasers or supply chain management professionals. For example, logistics and supply chain management are key components of CentrePort Canada objectives to promote the development of and investments in the Winnipeg-based inland port.

Logisticians, procurers and others who would otherwise be able to promote their skills and knowledge as supply chain management professionals to attract prospective international investors to Manitoba and CentrePort Canada could be impeded without being able to use the more internationally recognized supply management chain—sorry, supply chain management designation—

An Honourable Member: That's better.

Mr. Struthers: That's better. That's more like it, right.

Additionally, Manitoba graduates will also now be recognized internationally for their skills and knowledge respecting the distribution and transportation of goods made in Manitoba to the international marketplace. In order to reflect this broadened scope of practice, Bill 32 will more accurately reflect the nature of the work performed by professional purchasers and will be consistent with similar changes made in other provinces and elsewhere.

In fact, it is my understanding that, with the change in the institute's program designation, the number of annual graduates in Manitoba has increased by 40 per cent.

I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity. I want to thank the members of the opposition for attending the briefing that we had, and I look forward to the passage of this on to committee stage.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I move, seconded by the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed with Bill 34, The Property Registry Statutes Amendment Act.

**Bill 34—The Property Registry Statutes
Amendment Act**

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services and Labour (Ms. Howard), that Bill 34, The Property Registry Statutes Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, and seconded by the Minister of Family Services and Labour (Ms. Howard), that Bill 34, The Property Registry Statutes Amendment Act, be now read for a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

Mr. Struthers: It's my pleasure to sponsor Bill 34, The Property Registry Statutes Amendment Act, for second reading debate.

Last year our government committed to exploring innovative ways to cut costs, identify new revenue and increase efficiency. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that Bill 34 will enable Manitoba to benefit from the sale of the Property Registry assets to Teranet Manitoba for \$75 million and will also provide future revenue through annual royalties starting at \$11 million, with potential to increase to \$24 million.

The Property Registry is a public registry of land title holdings and encumbrances on personal and real property. Land titles offices provide a central and reliable system for recording the documents transferring ownership and interests in land.

The Province is responsible for maintaining the registry and guarantees the accuracy of the title, allowing families, for example, to obtain mortgages to purchase their homes with the absolute knowledge that they, in fact, are the legal owner of their home.

The personal property registry is where financial interests in personal property are registered. It allows for example, a financial institution to register their interest in a business—new—business's new capital investment to establish its priority against other potential creditors. Without this security, creditors would be less willing to finance personal property acquisitions, including, for example, families who need financing to purchase a vehicle.

All staff of the Property Registry were offered employment by Teranet Manitoba. The Registrar General will remain a senior civil servant within the Department of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs and will ensure services are delivered appropriately and within the law.

* (17:20)

Mr. Speaker, this amendment act includes minor changes to enable Teranet Manitoba to provide property registry services to Manitobans as set out in the statutes. Most of the changes are minor to reflect the new service-provider environment, including Teranet Manitoba will now own the property registry, and its staff will include district registrars and examiner of surveys.

Registrars and deputies will be designated by the Registrar General in co-operation with and as identified by the service provider. The service provider collects land transfer tax on behalf of the government and all records are government property and subject to FIPPA.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to sponsor this bill, and I think it demonstrates that our government is committed to efficiencies and innovation in service delivery. We have kept our commitment to look at new revenue-generating opportunities and ensuring Manitobans get the services they need. And again, I thank members of the opposition for attending the briefing on this bill, and I look forward to its passage at second reading.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed with Bill 39, The Government Efficiency Act (Various Acts Amended or Replaced to Consolidate Boards and Agencies and Eliminate Government Appointments).

**Bill 39—The Government Efficiency Act
(Various Acts Amended or Replaced to
Consolidate Boards and Agencies and
Eliminate Government Appointments)**

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), that Bill 39, The Government Efficiency Act (Various Acts Amended or Replaced to Consolidate Boards and Agencies and Eliminate Government Appointments), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Health, that Bill 39, The Government Efficiency Act (Various Acts Amended or Replaced to Consolidate Boards and Agencies and Eliminate Government Appointments), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, this bill makes the legislative amendments needed for government to move forward on its commitment to reduce government-appointed agencies, boards and commissions, ABCs, by 20 per cent.

It builds on other ABC efficiency initiatives, such as the reduction of regional health authorities from 11 to five, and the merger of Manitoba Lotteries and the Manitoba liquor commission. Through a government-through a cross-government review of ABCs, we identified 114 government-appointed ABCs, and after consultation with departments and ABCs, 23 were identified for amalgamation or dissolution.

In addition to our commitment to reduce ABCs by 20 per cent, we identified nine ABCs with external and provincial appointments and three internal ABCs have been identified for amalgamation or dissolution.

While not all of the reductions require legislative changes, some do, and that is what The Government Efficiency Act is all about. The amalgamation, removal of provincial appointees or elimination to the boards will be dealt with in this legislation.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, Bill 39 was developed after a cross-departmental review determined that there were a number of ways the Province can be more efficient by reducing the number of ABCs. This legislation is key to meeting the commitment to reduce the number of ABCs by 20 per cent. I look forward to support from members opposite and thank them again for attending the briefing on this bill.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Charleswood, that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed with Bill 28, The Health Services Insurance Amendment and Hospitals Amendment Act (Admitting Privileges).

**Bill 28—The Health Services Insurance
Amendment and Hospitals Amendment Act
(Admitting Privileges)**

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 28, The Health Services Insurance Amendment and Hospitals Amendment Act (Admitting Privileges); Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie et la Loi sur les hôpitaux (privilèges d'admission), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, the changes proposed in Bill 28 are intended to streamline the hospital admissions process, save time for patients and make the health-care system more efficient by granting nurse practitioners and midwives hospital admitting privileges.

Nurse practitioners and midwives have proven themselves in the Manitoba context, and these proposed changes recognize the fact that they possess the high level of training and qualifications necessary to admit to hospital in a safe and appropriate way that benefits patients and streamlines the admissions process.

Today more than a hundred nurse practitioners work in various health-care facilities across the province, including hospitals, quick care clinics, primary care clinics and personal care homes. Nurse practitioners can diagnose illnesses, treat conditions, prescribe medications and order diagnostic tests, offering patients and families more choice and convenience.

The proposed amendments will grant nurse practitioners hospital admitting privileges similar to physicians. As well, there are now 54 funded midwife positions across Manitoba. Midwives can order tests, prescribe medications for maternal and newborn care, diagnose and treat minor problems and attend births as the primary attendant.

The majority of care midwives provide to women and newborns takes place outside of hospital, in settings such as community health centres, patients' homes and the Winnipeg birth centre,

although giving birth remains one of the main reasons women are hospitalized.

Their proposed changes will allow midwives to admit to hospital for the purposes of prenatal and postnatal care, as well as labour and delivery, in accordance with regulations to be made under the act in consultation with the regional health authorities.

Nurse practitioners and midwives are trained and qualified to take on this added responsibility. Indeed, their regulatory colleges, our regional health authorities, as well as practitioners themselves have all told us these additional privileges not only make sense but they're also good for the system as a whole.

These proposed changes are consistent with our push to see all health care professionals working to their full scope of practice, and we have been working closely with professional regulatory bodies towards this goal.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed with Bill 45, The Competitive Drug Pricing Act (Various Acts Amended).

Bill 45—The Competitive Drug Pricing Act (Various Acts Amended)

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 45, The Competitive Drug Pricing Act (Various Acts Amended); Loi sur les médicaments à prix concurrentiel (modifications de diverses lois), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to finding efficiencies and reinvesting those savings into protecting front-line services. Whether it's cutting administration, using lean management or fighting for better drug prices, we are focused on getting the best value for—possible for patients in our health-care system.

Over the last year we have been able to negotiate lower prices for many generic drugs which will save Manitoba families and government over \$30 million.

A new way we are working on to get lower drug prices is by working with the other provinces. Through this new pan-Canadian drug competitive price—drug pricing initiative, we are able to secure lower prices for six of the most common generic drugs. But, going forward, we will need to ensure our officials are equipped with the tools and authority we need to continue this journey.

These new tools include the ability to remove a generic manufacturer's drug from the Pharmacare formulary if, for example, another manufacturer is offering lower pricing or if there are matters of public interest, such as potential safety of quality issues with a specific drug.

But this legislation isn't only about drug pricing; it's also about drug supply. We have listened to Manitoba families and our pharmacists who have shared their frustration when a particular drug is not in stock at the local pharmacy. There's no point, Mr. Speaker, in negotiating lower prices on drugs with a manufacturer if that manufacturer is then not able to supply the drugs in Manitoba at all.

This legislation will help to protect the supply of drugs for Manitoba families by giving Manitoba Health the legislated authority to cancel a product listing agreement with the drug manufacturer if it isn't able to supply the drug to Manitoba.

* (17:30)

New savings created by negotiating lower drug prices will help to expand the Pharmacare program and allow us to offer better drug coverage under the Home Cancer Drug Program, which is already the most comprehensive cancer drug program in the country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): I move, seconded by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Now proceed to Bill 26, The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

Bill 26—The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities): I move, seconded by the

Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 26, The Accessibility for Manitobans Act; Loi sur l'accessibilité pour les Manitobains, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Family Services and Labour (Ms. Howard), seconded by the honourable Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 26, The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

Ms. Howard: Mr. Speaker, it's my honour today to rise to speak to second reading of this bill.

It was a great day, I think, on the day when we introduced it and had so many people here to witness that, and I want to start off by saying this bill has really been a collective effort of many, many people: many people in the community, many people that work in my department over several years, many of our partners who have come together from business and labour, municipalities, to talk about this bill.

And I, for—not for one moment, would suggest that it's a perfect bill, but there is, I think, a time when—you know, there is a saying that sometimes the perfect can become the enemy of the good. And I think that this is the time for us to move forward with this kind of legislation, knowing that any bill could be improved, and, certainly, if there are suggestions for improvement, we'll be open to those at committee stage.

What this bill does is very groundbreaking for Manitoba. It's patterned on legislation in other provinces like Ontario and other countries like the United States, and it sets up a proactive approach to removing barriers to inclusion for people with disabilities.

We know that many Manitobans face barriers to full inclusion at some point in their lives. I know there are people on all sides of this House that either may have personal experience with that or have a loved one who has experience with that. We know that Manitoba's Human Rights Code ensures people with disabilities have the right to the same

opportunities as all Manitobans, and we envision a province where everyone can work, live and play, free from barriers to participation. And we think this bill will complement the Human Rights Code by establishing standards to achieve accessibility, not only for persons with disabilities, for—but for all Manitobans.

One of, I think, the very important parts of this bill is that the legislation very clearly does not rely on a definition of disability. Instead, it defines the barriers that we seek to remove. Eliminating barriers and preventing new ones will be accomplished through extensive consultations with persons with disabilities' organizations that will have a responsibility under established accessibility standards in the general public. I think that's really been a hallmark of the process of developing this bill, is wide-ranging consultations.

Principles such as access, equality and universal design will demonstrate the values that will guide the development of accessibility standards going forward. While the rights of people with disabilities are laid out in human rights codes, the path to achieving accessibility is not always clear. This bill sets out a process to achieve those results for all Manitobans.

I think one of the things that this bill also does is it makes clear that it's going to take all of us to do this work together. And, as I said at the beginning, sometimes we make the excellent the enemy of the good, or we wait for perfection to move; and, as we set about in doing this legislation, one of thing—cautions that I kept getting from people, you know, if you do this, somebody's going to stand up and say, but government, you're not perfect, so you shouldn't be bringing this bill in to apply to other people.

And, certainly, we're not perfect, and we have a ways to go, and we make changes every day, and we work to make things more accessible and better. But I think the goal of this is certainly not to say, government is perfect, and everybody else should adapt. The goal of this is to say, if all of us believe that we want to live in a place that is open to everyone, where we include everyone, where we use our creativity and our innovation to be inclusive, then it's going to take all of us, government included, as well as the private sector and the general public.

I look forward to hearing more debate on this bill. I want to again thank some of the people who served on the Accessibility Advisory Council, which spent a lot of time discussing how this bill should

come about. This bill is really—although it feels in some ways like the final step in a long journey, it is really the beginning of another journey. What this bill essentially does is set out a process to develop accessibility standards that will eventually apply to most of the areas of life in Manitoba. And I hope that, in the same way that many, many years ago, the government of the day brought in workplace safety and health legislation to recognize that we could proactively prevent injury in the workplace, that this bill, when it's fully realized, will also set about accessibility standards so that we can prevent barriers so that we have a Human Rights Code that not only gives people the right to accessibility, but we have a province where that right is fully realized.

So we'll continue the process. I know of this legislation and I—so far, throughout this process, I think this kind of approach has had good support from all sides of the House, and I look forward to briefing members of the opposition and I hope that we can continue to have that broad range of support and look forward, of course, to ideas to make this kind of bill even stronger.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Any debate on the bill?

Ready for the motion?

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I move, seconded by the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed with Bill 31, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act.

Bill 31—The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I move, seconded by the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 31, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la sécurité et l'hygiène du travail, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Howard: I am pleased to present Bill 31. This bill outlines amendments that are key components of our five-year plan for workplace injury and illness prevention. This is a new focus strategy to improve

occupational safety and health in our province. I know there's many people, many members of this House who, in their work lives, have been champions of workplace safety and health, yourself included, Mr. Speaker. I want to sincerely thank the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) that played a significant role in developing the action plan and going out and holding discussions with people who work in workplaces where they have—they deal with hazards every day, talk to employers, talk to people where we—who work in areas where we're endeavouring to bring the injury rate down. We know we still have far too many workplace injuries in this province and we know that we can do a better job working with our partners in areas like agriculture, for example, and the health-care sector where we know we have some ways to go in reducing injury.

Preventing workplace injuries and illness will take all of us. It'll take government, employers, labour organizations and people working every day to come together to identify and address hazards in the workplace.

The minister's Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health, which is made up of representatives of employees and employers, forwarded their review of the act, and that will help us on our journey to make Manitoba one of the safest places to work in North America.

This is the most comprehensive review of the act since 2002, and the proposed amendments will ensure Manitoba has modern workplace safety and health legislation that addresses current and emerging workplace issues.

The proposed amendments will also ensure Manitoba has effective compliance tools for improving the compliance in this province. Some of the amendments include provisions to allow immediate administrative penalties to be issued for defined high-hazard contraventions that present imminent danger to workers' safety or health, including working at heights without fall protection, unshored excavations, uncontrolled release of asbestos and working near overhead power lines. These are the types of infractions that can lead to serious injuries or death.

* (17:40)

We know that every day when our officers go out into the field they want to work co-operatively

with employers on removing hazards. But we also need to give them the tools that when they encounter the situations where there is a hazard that poses an imminent threat to a worker or to the general public that they're able to take immediate action.

This bill includes the ability to stop an employer from undertaking work anywhere in the province until appropriate control measures are put in place if that work may place workers at significant risk of injury. This is intended to address the very small group of employers that may flagrantly disregard the law and carry on work at multiple or transient locations. I think it's important to note, you know, we make laws for the situations where people are doing the wrong thing, but in my experience, certainly in workplace safety and health, the vast, vast majority of employers are interested in having a safe workplace and making sure that their employees go home every day safe and sound at the end of their shift.

There's also in here provisions to address repeated offences by allowing an administrative penalty to be issued for failing to maintain appropriate safety and health systems after an improvement order has been issued. This will penalize employers that initially comply with an improvement order only to backslide after compliance has been granted, and this places workers at risk. We also use this bill to enshrine worker safety and health rights in legislation and allow an administrative penalty to be issued when an employer has prevented workers from exercising their rights.

We've put in place stronger provisions to provide stronger protections and controls when a worker has refused unsafe work. We decreased the threshold for requiring a designated safety and health worker representative from 10 workers to five workers to ensure that employees are involved in identifying and addressing hazards at the workplace. Ensuring that people who are at work have a stronger voice in safety and health is consistent with our action plan.

We increased the ability of Workplace Safety and Health to collect penalties in order to hold employers accountable for disregarding the law, and we allowed personal information to be posted when reporting on Workplace Safety and Health enforcement activities to ensure Manitobans have the information they need about safety and health in their workplaces. And we have begun posting

information about improvement orders and fines and penalties that are issued to employers, both as a way of ensuring accountability but also as a way of letting other Manitobans know what the Workplace Safety and Health division is doing to enforce the law. This also provides for the appointment role and functions of Manitoba's Chief Prevention Officer. Using a number of research tools, the Chief Prevention Officer will review and publicly report on the status of safety and health in the province, including the effectiveness of enforcement and prevention activities.

We brought in this bill, Mr. Speaker, during the week where we marked the Day of Mourning, and we also marked the North American Occupational Safety and Health Week. And it is in the spirit of that week and the spirits of that Day of Mourning, whose motto is that we mourn the dead and we fight for the living, and that is in that spirit that we bring forward this bill on workplace health and safety.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I move, seconded by the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now move on with Bill 44, The International Education Act.

Bill 44—The International Education Act

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): I move, seconded by the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 44, The International Education Act, Loi sur l'éducation internationale, be now read for a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Advanced Education, seconded by the honourable Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, that Bill 44, The International Education Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the contents of the bill and recommends it to the House, and the message has been tabled as well.

Ms. Selby: I'm pleased to be presenting to the Legislature Bill 44, Manitoba's International Education Act, for second reading today.

In Manitoba, the number of international students on our campuses has more than doubled in the last 10 years, and it is essential for Manitoba institutions to continue to become internationalized so our province and our citizens can compete in the global marketplace, play a role in addressing worldwide issues and engage in meaningful international collaboration.

International education has vast potential for increasing intercultural awareness and promoting global understanding. International students enhance Manitoba's social fabric, bring unique perspective to our classroom, and contribute to our economic and community development. They add to our pool of skilled workers if they choose to remain in our province, and for the many who do not stay, they return home prepared to act as informal ambassadors for Manitoba, opening doors for co-operation and trade, and becoming sources of future inward investment.

The 2010 Kunin report, commissioned by the federal Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, estimates that international students are currently contributing over \$153 million annually and supporting over 1,600 jobs in our province. In our turn, our province has a duty to care and ensure for the protection and safety of international students who are far away from family and support and to guard Manitoba's reputation as a destination of choice for quality education.

Only three countries currently have some form of legislation regulating the protection of international students and the promotion of international education: Australia, New Zealand and Ireland. And these are our three strongest competitors.

Manitoba will be the first jurisdiction in Canada to provide a legislative framework to regulate education providers that want to enrol international students, codifying best practices for ensuring their welfare, safety and protecting the integrity of Manitoba institutions that provide international education programs.

The act, first introduced on May 13th, will exercise government prerogative to bring province-wide coherence to the field, and to provide greater

assurance and comfort for international students, and their parents, as well as administrators and policy makers at home.

The act will provide the integrity, sustainability and growth of international education by giving the Province the legal authority to designate and authorize education providers eligible to host international students, including: school divisions, independent schools, colleges, universities, private vocational institutions, flight schools and language schools.

It will also establish and enforce a code of practice and conduct for all education providers that wish to host international students and levy an annual fee to enforce and support measures to reduce fraud and support student welfare and to advance the goals of Manitoba's international education strategy.

Manitoba works closely with our federal colleagues at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, who assist provinces and territories in marketing Canada's education opportunities abroad, and with the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, who regulate Canada's immigration progress, including those who are admitted for international students.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada is currently undertaking major revisions to their international student program and changing the process under which they will approve study permits for international students coming into Canada. And as part of those changes, provinces and territories will be provided to designate which institutions will be eligible to host international students, and only students accepted at designated institutions will be issued a study permit by CIC.

The act will also provide an important framework outlining how Manitoba will designate institutions, codifying best practices surrounding student recruitment, and care and support of foreign students.

A government assurance of safety will appeal to international students and their families and will provide a competitive edge for Manitoba compared with those jurisdictions without such protections.

Protecting students will also protect the reputation of the Province and Study Manitoba as our provincial brand. Enforcing adherence to the code of practice and conduct is an appropriate risk-

management strategy for our province, and our government is pleased to be introducing Bill 44 for the Legislature's second reading today.

Thank you.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): I move, seconded by the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: I believe that concludes the list of bills before the House for consideration this afternoon.

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

CORRIGENDUM

On May 22, 2013, page 1559, second column, third paragraph, should have read:

And, unlike when the Leader of the Opposition was in the federal parliament and wiped out the national 'darekey'-daycare program, we are expanding daycare in Manitoba. We've doubled the number of spaces, we've increased wages, and we've provided a pension plan for daycare workers.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 23, 2013

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are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/index.html>