

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

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Introduction of bills. Move on to—

PETITIONS

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Yes, good afternoon. 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 G. Barkman, M. Barkman, D. Dewey 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.

Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal

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

And these are the reasons for the petition:

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 announced on November 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

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

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

Municipalities deserve to be treated with respect. Any amalgamation 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 reserve his decision to force municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents to amalgamate.

This petition's signed by G. Kloosterman, S. Woywada, D. Dobbyn and many, many more Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

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

The reasons for this petition are 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.

Signed by J. Nitzche, A. Lazarenko, A. Sinclair and many other Manitobans.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, 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 and 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 M. Pouteau, J. Eastland and S. Thistle and many, many more fine 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. Wadin, C. Graham, P. Emmond and many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): 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.

* (13:40)

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.

This petition is signed by D. Elliot, A. Moore, B. Mowat and many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. 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 a 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 submitted on behalf of W. Lukow, K. Willis, W. Zabolotz and many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, 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.

(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 the democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

So 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 C. Allison, D. Plaisier, B. Lund and many, many others.

Ring Dike Road—Ste. Rose du Lac

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider upgrading the Ring Dike Road at Ste. Rose du Lac into a provincial road, and (2) to request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider upgrading the Ring Dike Road at the same time that work is being done at the junction of PTH 68 and PTH 5.

And this petition is signed by D. Lecunff, C. Wilkinson, J. Vande Poehé and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

An increase 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.

And this petition is signed by B. Zonneved, T. Dueck, J. Lesuk and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, 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.

(5) 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 K. Hammond, B. Hammond, M. Vercaigne and many, many other Manitobans.

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

(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 a legally required referendum.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by V. Reiner, B. Galbraith and N. Sheane and many more fine Manitobans.

Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal

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:

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

And this petition is signed by K. Gagnon, M. Dyck and K. Hesse and many others.

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 legal—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.

And this petition has been signed by H. Ellingson, by C. Ellingson and J. Zoinkiw and many, many more fine Manitobans.

* (13:50)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table supplementary information for the Department of Sport for 2013 and '14.

Also supplementary information for the Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs for 2013 and '14.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): I'm pleased to table Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, 2013-2014 Departmental Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Manitoba Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade.

And I'm also pleased to table Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, 2013-14 Departmental Expenditure Estimates for Manitoba Education.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Arlene Skull, principal of Gordon Bell High School, who is the guest of the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer). On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

And a few moments ago—I just want to place this on the record—we had with us from Stonybrook Middle School 55 grade 6 students under the direction of Mike Reimer. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

And I'd like to welcome all our guests here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PST Increase Request to Withdraw

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): The government's phony rationale for hiking the PST using flood prevention as an excuse is just disrespectful.

We know that throughout the government's first 13 years in office, they committed less than one fifth of 1 per cent to flood mitigation work. We know that they've exaggerated their commitment to the trench at the north end or the outlet at the north end of Lake Manitoba by 400 per cent. And we know that they have blamed the federal government but admitted that they haven't actually requested a meeting requesting support from them in terms of funding.

So this disrespects flood victims past, present and future. It is disrespectful to federal and municipal partners. And it's disrespecting the intelligence of Manitobans.

Will the Premier finally agree that he's failed to make his case for hiking the PST, and will he end the disrespect and drop the campaign to raise the PST immediately?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Building and Renewal Fund, first and foremost, put \$250 million out there to protect people along the Assiniboine valley from Brandon

up to Lake Manitoba, throughout Lake Manitoba into Lake St. Martin.

And that commitment is made now so that all the planning can go on, all the environmental reviews can be done, all the engineering studies can be done, all the consultations with the community, all of these things are now required by law to be done and ensure that those communities get the same protection.

When we spent a billion dollars in the Red River Valley and around the city of Winnipeg, the city of Winnipeg alone benefited by a \$670-million investment which allowed us to further the work started in the 1960s to protect the city. And that billion dollars has saved \$30 billion in damage. That's a good investment, Mr. Speaker.

Government Spending Accountability

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, I mean, 13 years and now we get commitments, not to the work but to studies.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't a builder; this a blamer. It's always somebody else's fault. The Premier has an out-of-control spending addiction and he blames Greece. He has a \$2-billion deficit since the last election; he blames Mother Nature. He's got deteriorating social services; he's probably going to blame bad parents and seniors for getting old. But the health-care lineups he's blaming on Gary Filmon. And the fact of the matter is hydro rates and skyrocketing hydro debt—he hasn't yet, but I expect him to blame Tim Sale pretty soon, Len Evans, Ed Schreyer, everybody but him.

Manitobans are tired of the disrespect. They're onto his blame game. Placing blame is not accepting responsibility.

Will the Premier finally look in the mirror, stop blaming Manitobans and everyone else for his problems and say, I need to get my spending under control?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Manitoba's per capita spending over the last five years is the second lowest in the country. That's reality, Mr. Speaker.

But unlike the members opposite, we make priorities. We decide where the spending should go, in consultation with Manitobans. And they have said that flood protection is important. They have said personal care homes are important. They have said new schools for a growing and younger population is important.

Let's remember what the members opposite wanted to do in this budget. They wanted to make across-the-board cuts. They wanted to lay off nurses. They wanted to fire teachers. They wanted to put front-line police officers and corrections personnel on the employment rolls. They wanted to cut back the cancer-care program we made available to the public. All of those things they wanted to do in one stroke of the pen, Mr. Premier.

That's how they would govern. We will govern differently. We will govern with an ear to the ground on the priorities of Manitobans.

Government Priorities Respect for Democracy

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Appreciate the Freudian slip, Mr. Speaker, but the fact of the matter is this government's priorities are ribbon cuttings, their vote taxes and their spin.

And their broken promises of disrespect for Manitobans are starting to show: a half a billion dollars of disrespectful, broken-promise taxes for Manitoba taxpayers, millions of dollars of unkept promises that disrespect flood victims in our province and a spin campaign that belittles local governments, that disrespects the fact they were elected by Manitobans to be respected.

But worse, bills to eliminate the equal rights of Manitobans to protection under the law, bills to put NDP Cabinet ministers above the law, bills to tear up the rights of Manitoba citizens to vote; these are the priorities of this government.

Will the Premier finally admit that he truly does disrespect equality, liberty and democracy?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the greatest attack on equality in the province of Manitoba was the Leader of the Opposition saying he supports two-tier health care in the province of Manitoba. The greatest attack on liberty in Manitoba was when the Leader of the Opposition was a senior Cabinet minister that orchestrated the vote-splitting scandal in 1995 election. That was the greatest attack on liberty in Manitoba, and the greatest attack on opportunity in Manitoba was when the Leader of the Opposition sat at the table, slashed funding for public schools, slashed funding for universities, slashed funding for colleges and forced people onto the unemployment rolls and out of the province; on an average of 3,000 people a year left the province of Manitoba.

When it comes to equality, when it comes to liberty and when it comes to opportunity, members opposite should have voted for this budget.

PST Increase Request to Withdraw

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): And that answer from a government that will lie and say anything just to get elected and from a Premier—and from a Premier—who, before the election in 2011, said, read my lips, no new taxes.

Well, Manitoba taxpayers were shown disrespect and they were betrayed by this government, this NDP government, and now they're paying the price. We've seen the largest tax grab in the last two budgets in the history of the province of Manitoba.

I want to ask the Premier today: Will he show some respect to Manitobans and reverse his decision about increasing the PST?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I recall, over our time here, when we reduced taxes to Manitobans by \$1.25 billion. An average family in Manitoba pays \$2,400 less. Members opposite voted against every one of those tax reductions.

In this budget they're voting against a personal tax deduction for families. They're voting against the dependants tax deduction for families. They're voting against a spousal tax deduction for families. They're voting against an increase in the seniors tax credit, and they're voting against an increase in the threshold of tax-free income for small business up \$425,000.

Not only do we respect the cost-of-living requirements of Manitobans, we also want to keep them safe from flooding and we also want to have seniors homes for the elderly and we want to have schools for young people. All of those things have to be done at the same time to have prosperity in Manitoba.

We listen to Manitobans; they don't.

Referendum Request

Mrs. Mitchelson: And this, again, from a Premier that said in 2011, read my lips, no new taxes.

Mr. Speaker, how can Manitobans believe anything this government says when they'll lie and say anything just to get elected?

* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker, if they won't stop the increase on the PST, will they at least show some respect to Manitobans and give them the right to vote, as they do under law today, on a referendum before they increase the PST?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I actually appreciate the question from the member opposite, because it allows us to say the following.

We said we would keep Manitoba one of the most affordable places to live in the country, and for a family of five at \$70,000 income, they went to the No. 1 ranking for affordability in the country. How did we accomplish that? We reduced taxes for families. We cut home heating, auto insurance and electricity rates—the lowest in the country—in a special piece of legislation the members opposite didn't afford, Mr. Speaker.

When they were in office, electricity rates for rural and northern members were higher than they were for people in the city. They're now equal for everybody in Manitoba.

When they were in office, the National Child Benefit was clawed back from the lowest income people in Manitoba. Now every low-income family in Manitoba gets an additional \$500 per month; \$48 million of benefits for modest-income families in Manitoba. That's making progress, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for River East, on a final supplementary.

Mrs. Mitchelson: This Premier has absolutely no credibility when he said before the last election, read my lips, no new taxes, and what did he do? What did he do? Mr. Speaker, he betrayed Manitobans and he raised the PST and he raised all kinds of other taxes and fees—the largest tax grab in the history of the province of Manitoba.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the very basic, simple question: Will he respect Manitobans' democratic right and will he allow Manitobans a vote before he increases the PST?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I would only ask the member to take advice from the Leader of the Opposition, who said on the record—when he championed the bill for balanced budgets, he said, granted there are restrictions in this legislation the members have talked about that they suggest are unreasonable or that would handcuff future legislators. I do not believe that this is true. I believe

the legislation can be, by any subsequent Legislature, withdrawn or repealed, so I do not believe that the hands-being-tied argument is one that has any validity at all.

We respect Manitobans, which is why we want to give them flood protection. We respect Manitobans, which is why we want to look after the elderly. We respect Manitobans, which is why we want to build schools for young children. And we respect Manitobans by keeping the cost of living in Manitoba among the top three in Canada. Those are real results for all Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

PST Increase Impact on Municipalities

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Unlike the spenDP, municipal governments must balance their budgets each and every year.

Last year this NDP government expanded the PST to insurance premiums. That cost Manitoba municipalities for their insurance coverage alone an additional \$764,000. This year, with the proposed illegal hike in PST, that cost will rise to \$873,000. And that's only on insurance premiums.

Why is this spenDP government so desperate for money they choose to download even more costs to local municipalities and, ultimately, local ratepayers?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): The good working relationship we have with AMM and the municipalities in Manitoba, they asked us to provide them with funding—certainly, 1 per cent of PST, which we've done.

So as a government, this year we're providing them with an 8.5 per cent increase, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who says, you know what they need? Manitobans need a little bit of tough love. And tough love—his definition of tough love is, of course, Mr. Speaker, across-the-board cuts, including to municipalities. Never mind an 8.5 per cent increase, but slashing, hacking, slicing and dicing municipal funding—that's their idea of a budget.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, any increase that this government talks about is more than offset by the tax grab that they're doing on the municipalities by including the PST.

Municipal budgets are completed and balanced by March 31st each year. Now, with the illegal increase in PST on July 1st, local governments must redo their budgets, again, at considerable cost to the ratepayers. PST on insurance premiums, increased

gas taxes, increased vehicle registrations are just a few of the additional costs downloaded by the spenDP onto municipalities.

Why does this spenDP minister continue to make municipalities pay for the spenDP government's spending addiction?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, over the last number of years we've increased funding to municipalities by \$200 million, from \$215 million in 2005 to \$415 million in Budget 2013, Mr. Speaker, increase of 8.5 per cent, whereas across the country there have been cuts or budgets have been kept flat for municipalities.

And members opposite, they'll bring in petitions every day, Mr. Speaker, an \$80-million bridge here, \$50-million bridge over there, \$10-million road over here. You know, every single day they bring in petitions asking the government of Manitoba to continue increasing. Meanwhile, the Leader of the Opposition says, what do municipalities need? They need a little tough love, and that's what we're going to give them.

Mr. Speaker, it's unbelievable that the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite—

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

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: If I might interrupt proceedings for a moment while we have the students here, we have with us today from Donwood elementary school 42 grade 4 students under the direction of Kristine Jafka. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson). On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome our students here this afternoon.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: And for the information of the House, that time will be added to question period.

Mr. Pedersen: And this coming from the minister of toughness on amalgamations, so.

Last year this spenDP government imposed an additional \$764,000 cost to local governments just on insurance premiums—rising to \$873,000 this year—additional gas taxes, vehicle registration. The list goes on and on of additional costs to municipalities by the spenDP.

Now, with the impending illegal 14 per cent increase in the PST, municipalities will have to rework their budgets to cover the extra costs imposed by the spendP.

Why is this minister and this spendP government so desperate for revenue they have to increase taxes to another level of government and local ratepayers rather than curbing their spending addiction?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, Mr. Speaker, through amalgamations we're hoping many of the municipalities won't be spending 40 per cent and upwards on administration on their budgets, thereby providing those savings that will be put back to those ratepayers.

Mr. Speaker, based on historical census information, rural Manitobans with less than a thousand population, 90 per cent saw their populations begin a steady decline over 70 years ago: 50 per cent reached their largest population in 1941, 30 per cent reached their largest population in 1931, 19 per cent reached their largest population in 1921, 13 per cent reached their largest population in 1911, 12 per cent reached their largest population in 1901. The horse-and-buggy party—Manitobans have seen them for what they're worth, supporting depopulation all over the province.

We believe these municipalities will come together, be stronger, Mr. Speaker, going forward, over—

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

Ministerial Accountability Conflict of Interest

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Well, and this is really about treating Manitoba taxpayers with respect. That's what it's about, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we've been asking who is footing the NDP legal bills, and we're getting this—the runaround from the NDP.

I'd like to ask: What does the Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau), the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) and Toronto Mayor Rob Ford have in common? Mr. Speaker, I'll take that. Yes, all three are facing conflict of interest allegations.

Mr. Speaker, will the two ministers facing conflict of interest allegations be paying their own

legal bills, or are we as taxpayers to be on the hook for their legal bills?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, you can file that question on—in—under the heading, how low can you go. That kind of question really deserves no response. In terms of any substance, it has none.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite should understand that we're continuing to provide support to horse racing in this province. We're continuing to provide significant support to the harness racing industry.

* (14:10)

Yes, we've taken \$5 million from the horse racing industry and put it into hospitals. Now, that's the real issue, Mr. Speaker, not the nonsense that the member opposite just put on the record. The member, actually, I think he gets the award for how low you can go, but maybe in his follow-up questions he has an opportunity to redeem himself by focusing on the real issue, which is taking money from the horse racing industry, yes, and putting it into hospitals.

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba taxpayers want to know who's paying the bill.

Now we know the conflict of interest allegations won't be heard 'til September. We know the meter's running on the legal fees.

Mr. Speaker, we know Toronto Mayor Ford, he took the high road. He covered his own legal bills.

So will the Minister of Healthy Living—will he be picking up his own legal bills?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I'm seldom speechless. Okay, this time I was momentarily speechless, but any member who thinks that Rob Ford was taking the high road, he's got another thing coming.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, this is about treating taxpayers with respect. They're asking the NDP to come clean on this.

You know, Mr. Ford, he picked up the tab on his legal bills.

We're asking: Will the Minister of Finance be picking up his legal fees?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I'll repeat it one more time for member—the members opposite. We continue to provide support for horse racing in this

province. We've provided \$75 million since 1999. We're now going to be supporting harness racing. We're going to have the same site-holder agreement for all—the same we have for all commercial site holders.

I know I want to say to the member opposite, particularly when it comes to this government, we're proud in terms of the priorities, to bring hospitals first, and I want to remind him it wasn't that long ago they were saying the Grace Hospital was going to be closed, Mr. Speaker. Again, members opposite have no credibility when it comes to the province, certainly when it comes to the member for Assiniboine and the west end of the province, because we've been there and we will continue to be there for the horse racing industry in this province.

Manitoba Public Insurance Rate Increase

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Yes, they'll continue to be there and they'll continue to dip into Manitobans' pockets, because we recently heard that the minister of flip-flop is not able to protect Manitobans from yet an ender—another NDP tax grab as MPI has applied for a rate increase.

They lost almost \$48 million last year under this minister's guidance, almost \$36 million from a drop in investment income. Now, Mr. Speaker, I see in documents tabled in this House by the minister of flip-flop that, I quote: In accordance with section 12(1) of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act, the Minister of Finance is responsible for the investments of the corporation.

Mr. Speaker, will this Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) own up that this rate hike is just another tax grab and it's due to his own incompetence and mismanagement?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): I appreciate the question from the member for Brandon West on a day that I was in Brandon, Mr. Speaker, standing shoulder to shoulder with the Brandon Police Service, providing them with nearly \$60,000 from criminal property forfeiture to assist police officers in Brandon doing their work keeping their streets safe.

Now, the member for Brandon West, who I know does not like Manitoba Public Insurance, I know that he is one Manitoban who doesn't like paying the lowest rates in the entire country as proven by Deloitte's, who I believe has young drivers

in his house who would pay three, five, seven times the premiums that we pay here in Manitoba. I know the member opposite does not like Manitoba Public Insurance, but Manitobans do because Manitoba Public Insurance provides quality public auto insurance, and instead of rebates and profits going out of the province they stay right here for Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Helwer: Well, Mr. Speaker, yes, we have rental rebate—rent-a-rebates here, because they give the rebate and then they drag it back in.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, I know that \$36 million seems like a small amount to a minister that has run deficits of \$1.12 billion and \$583 million, but this MPI increase is another tax grab on Manitobans who are reeling from two of the biggest tax increases in the last 25 years.

Will the minister just admit that this proposed MPI rate hike is due to his own incompetence and mismanagement?

Mr. Swan: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the member for Brandon West wants to talk about rebates, because that's been on top of the 17.8 per cent decrease in MPI premiums since the Leader of the Opposition wandered away from the Legislature last time.

On top of that, on five occasions in 2001, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011, the Public Utilities Board has ordered a rebate to be paid, not to shareholders in Toronto or New York or London or Montréal but to Manitobans, giving back our money to Manitobans. And that's a great thing.

And on top of—the member still does not seem to understand that Manitobans pay the lowest rates for auto insurance in the entire country, something that households like mine, households like people that I represent in this Legislature, households of ordinary Manitobans find very, very important. I'm sorry the member for Brandon West does not agree.

Mr. Helwer: Yes, those rebates were ordered by the Public Utilities Board, not given to the universities, not for the road infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier—minister preaches doom and gloom while markets are going up around the world. In a rising market, the Minister of Finance mismanaged MPI's funds and had almost thirty mix—six million dollars in lower investment returns.

Mr. Speaker, this proposed increase in MPI rates is just another latest tax grab from hard-working

Manitobans. The NDP government has lied to Manitobans about tax increases.

Will this minister admit over—that this MPI rate hike, this latest tax grab, is due to his own incompetence and mismanagement?

Mr. Swan: Mr. Speaker, I think we're getting somewhere, because I believe I did hear the member for Brandon West now agree that it's the Public Utilities Board that sets rates and the Public Utilities Board ordered unprecedented rebates to Manitobans in five of the last 12 years on top of the 17.8 per cent decrease in auto insurance rates for Manitobans, which means that Manitobans now enjoy a huge advantage over those living in other provinces.

Not only do we have the lowest auto insurance premiums, but we put legislation into effect to make sure that Manitobans pay the lowest combined rates for home heating, for hydro and for public insurance. That is a huge advantage for Manitoba families. That is a huge advantage for Manitoba families with potential young drivers coming up in their households. That is a huge advantage for Manitoba businesses. It's one of the reasons this is one of the most affordable provinces in the entire country.

Midwife Education Program Update

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Yesterday the Minister for Advanced Education stood up in this House and said that Manitoba has more and more midwives practising in this province. But, Mr. Speaker, the numbers don't lie, even if the same can't be said for some government ministers.

Mr. Speaker, there are 54 funded spots for midwives. There were 45 last year; there are 35 now. That's a difference of 10; do the 'subtraction'—subtraction. And it indicates there are less and less, not more and more.

And what about the ratio of graduates? One student every seven years. Manitoba needs 200 midwives, and that means at this rate we'll get them 1,400 years from now.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain how all her efforts have resulted in less and less instead of more and more?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I thank the member for the question. Certainly it does give us an opportunity to let the member know that, indeed, when we started in 1999 there were zero midwifery positions. That was, of course, on the heel

of the maternal and child director—[interjection] Oh, I seem to have struck a nerve.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I'm sure honourable members would like to hear the answer posed by the honourable member of the opposition, so I'd like to ask all honourable members to give the honourable Minister of Health the opportunity to respond to the question that was posed.

Ms. Oswald: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have 54 funded positions. We started with zero when we began in 1999.

There are fewer midwives practising at the moment because a number of them are on maternity leave.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, it's funny this minister would make us think that this is a success story, one grad in seven years. Number of midwives is down, she admits, and there's millions spent. I have a—it's a funny idea what this minister thinks success looks like.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. Selby) said, we believe women and families deserve choice on how they would like to choose to give birth.

I'd like to ask this minister: If the government is so committed to giving women the choice, why is it that a hundred per cent of requests to give birth at the south Winnipeg centre from women outside of the Perimeter get denied?

* (14:20)

Ms. Oswald: I'm not sure, with all the bluster and bombast over there, that the member was able to hear me say that there are presently fewer midwives providing service because they themselves are on maternity leave. Certainly the member opposite would not suggest that we should mandate a no-birthing policy with our own midwives. That's what it sounded like. I think that would be a tad daft, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell the member that, indeed, the Winnipeg birthing centre is going to open the doors to enable rural clients and rural midwives to provide services there where safe and appropriate. That work is going on, and that's going to open up in the fall, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear. Last year, exactly at this time, there were 13 births in one month at the Birth Centre. But the most recent stats

show there were only 12. The numbers are flat. Now where's the bluster and the bombast?

When the south—when that south Winnipeg Birth Centre opened, the minister said it could handle 500 births in one year. Only 112 births in the first year of operation, one new midwife grad in seven years, three out of four requests for service get denied and, on top of that, the number of births being done is flat. There's no evidence she's even going in the right direction.

Given her record, how can this minister give assurances to Manitoba that they will actually be afforded any amount of choice when it comes to midwives and giving birth?

Ms. Oswald: Well, yes, Mr. Speaker, I must concede that was a staggering drop of one from 13 to 12 births in the last month. It was staggering.

Mr. Speaker, the members of the opposition have been slagging the midwives from the get-go. They would—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

I'm sure all honourable members know that time in question period is precious and the clock is ticking here. We also have visitors in the gallery with us today, and we have members of the public that are perhaps watching us via their televisions. I am asking for the co-operation of all honourable members to keep the level down a little bit, please, so that our guests here can both hear the questions and the answers.

The honourable Minister of Health, to continue with her answer.

Ms. Oswald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is members opposite didn't have the least bit of interest in proclaiming The Midwifery Act; we did that. Members opposite didn't have the least bit of interest in funding midwives, because they funded zero of them; we fund 54.

Members opposite have been slagging the Birth Centre from the moment that it opened its front doors. Members opposite cancelled the child and maternal directorate when the Leader of the Opposition was in the Filmon Cabinet.

They couldn't care less about women's choice about birthing or, frankly, anything else. I find his line of questioning a bit daft.

Flood Evacuees (Lake St. Martin) Return to Community

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, on today's third day of our emergency sitting, a report by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness has been released, which provides a tally of 30,000 homeless people in Canada.

In Manitoba, we know that there are about 2,000 people who've been out of their homes since 2011 as a result of the government's artificial flooding of Lake St. Martin. The report says no one should be homeless and using emergency services for longer than a few weeks, but the people of Lake St. Martin have been stuck out of their homes for more than two years.

I ask the Premier: By what date will all the people of Lake St. Martin be able to live in their new community?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I thank the member for the question.

The tragedy of the flooding in Lake St. Martin has dislocated hundreds of families in that community, has dislocated hundreds of people from that community.

And it has been our objective to get them home in such a way that flooding will not occur again in the future, which has meant we are working with them to acquire more land at a higher level.

We built the emergency channel so that the lake was brought down an additional 3 feet in a timely fashion. We are now going to make that channel permanent, Mr. Speaker, as well as an additional channel out of Lake Manitoba, and we are committed to buying the kind of land and making land available through the Crown that'll allow them to be on higher ground and never have to go through this experience again.

Progress has been slower than all of us want, but, indeed, progress has been made.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, today the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released their Poverty or Prosperity report, which states, and I quote: "Canada cannot and need not allow another generation of Indigenous citizens to languish in poverty." In addition to the continuing general situation of high rates of poverty, many homes are without clean running water and there's poor housing in many communities.

The people of the community of Lake St. Martin First Nation have languished for more than two years without being able to go home.

Will the Premier commit today to ensuring when the people will be able to go home and that they will have good housing and clean running water in all their homes in the new community of Lake St. Martin?

Mr. Selinger: Important part of that question, Mr. Speaker, was the recognition that we need a new Lake St. Martin, and that means that homes are going to have to be built on higher land, of which we have acquired some significant amounts of it from private landowners up there.

We have also committed to make Crown land available and more Crown land than has ever been made available to ensure that when that community rebuilds—and the process will go ahead. We've got good co-operation—we now have good co-operation from the federal government on this after very senior-level interventions at the ministerial and Prime Minister's level. We will build proper homes on higher ground.

We will ensure that the lake drains more quickly with the emergency channel being made permanent. The combination of permanent channels and people living on higher ground, we believe, will ensure that people will not have to go through this again.

That will take more time than anybody wants, but we want to have a solution that is durable and will not put those people at risk of flooding again as we have seen in the past, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Human Rights Commission released its report on equality rights of Aboriginal people yesterday. The report documents a widespread shortcoming in the housing situation of Aboriginal people in Canada.

Manitoba continues to be a laggard instead of a leader in addressing the rights of Aboriginal people, with more than 750 homes still without clean running water.

I ask the Premier: When will it be that all the homes in northern Manitoba have clean running water and that all the people have good housing?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, our approach to this is very clear. We have seen over 220 homes now be scheduled and are in the process of being equipped with clean water, clean sewer. We're building an east-side road that will allow goods and services to

get to those communities more rapidly at a lower cost. We are providing nursing stations in communities.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I was in War Lake where I saw the work that our firefighters did. Every home in that area had a sprinkler on the top of the roof that was providing a halo of moisture to prevent the fires from destroying that home. That's the service we provide, on an airstrip that we built, with a nursing home that we helped build with the federal government.

So those communities, which have been ignored by the members opposite—and I might add, the member himself, when he was a member of the federal government, cut funding to First Nations in northern Manitoba.

We're working with them to build roads, we're working with them to build housing, we're working with them for clean water and sewer, and we are there when they need protection from fires. We will be there with them, Mr. Speaker, today, tomorrow—

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon.

Cancer Control Program First Nations, Metis and Inuit

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, every year more than 6,000 Manitobans are diagnosed with cancer, while up to 10 times that number are suspected of having cancer and undergo testing before it is ruled out. The Manitoba government is committed to ensuring all Manitobans dealing with cancer get the help they need when they need it most.

Can the Minister of Health please advise the House as to steps she has taken to help ensure First Nations, Metis and Inuit families are able to better access cancer diagnose, treatment and support?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Yes, Mr. Speaker, it was my great honour to accompany the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) and Dr. Dhali Dhaliwal today at CancerCare Manitoba to officially open the First Nations, Metis and Inuit cancer program, which will have as its chief mandate ensuring that those individuals that may find difficulty in accessing the system, not for reasons of medical care but for cultural reasons, for reasons of language and any number of other barriers that may exist for them as a result of their history, will feel more comfortable, will feel more confident to ensure that they get the

care that they so rightfully deserve, just as every other Manitoban does.

* (14:30)

We heard from Elder Ann Lacquette, who told of her journey with her husband. She's a strong voice in ensuring that our First Nations and new immigrants have the best possible care when they need it most.

Keeyask Community Centre Program Update

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Hydro ratepayers and TC families are looking for respect. The families from TCN are wondering, along with ratepayers, where the \$125,000 worth of furniture went that was purchased for the Keeyask Centre, the centre that was never built.

Could the member for Kildonan—the NDP member for Kildonan—could he get up and respectfully answer and could he show some accountability?

Where is the \$125,000 worth of furniture that was purchased for a centre that doesn't exist?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, I—when talking about respect, I wonder if the member would understand that we're working in partnership with First Nations, and Hydro has provided—instead of flooding and then paying a billion dollars in reparations as Hydro has done in the old days, Hydro is working with First Nations in order to build 'economic' opportunities.

And why do members opposite so against hydro development, would stop it in its track, would stop 32,000 person-years of jobs, would stop the fact that we'll have the lowest hydro rates and First Nations will have the lowest hydro rates in the country? Why does the member so strongly against Manitoba Hydro and building in partnership with First Nations?

PST Increase Referendum Request

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, Cliff Doell owns and operates a small business in Altona, Hairway Studios. Cliff was set to expand his business when this spendDP broadened the PST to cover the products that he offers to his customers, such as haircuts and manicures, also with his operating expenses of business insurance and

building insurance. Next they decided to raise the PST by 14 per cent. Another slap in the face was when the spendDP gave themselves a political donation of \$5,000, a vote tax to shore up a lazy political party.

I want to ask the Premier (Mr. Selinger): When will he show respect for Manitobans and small business owners like Cliff Doell and call a referendum?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): You know, quite unlike members opposite, the doom-and-gloom, the-sky-is-falling members opposite, the Royal Bank came out today and they said, Manitoba—the words they used was, maintaining its cruise speed, in the report that it put forward.

Mr. Speaker, the Royal Bank very clearly said the unemployment rate forecast—is forecast to decline to 5 per cent this year and a further decline to 4.6 per cent in 2014. That's good news. Retail sales are expected in Manitoba to increase by 2.6 per cent this year and 4.6 per cent next year. Expected housing starts will increase by 500 for a total of 6,700 this year—

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

Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Nora's Diner

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, small business is the backbone of any community. The local restaurant is a hallmark of small-town Manitoba, where conversation and coffee shops help build communities. In 2009, Jeff and Kathy Dyck saw a need in the community of Gretna for a local restaurant and opened Nora's Diner, named after Jeff's mom who had always dreamed of moving back to Gretna.

Nora's Diner is truly a labour of love. They welcome their guests, rather than their customers, six days a week, with regulars coming from as far as Winkler, Morden and Winnipeg. The atmosphere is not one that you would re—would expect from a local restaurant. It truly feels like you're dining in Jeff and Kathy's home for a dinner party. The menu began with only three items and grew with their business, introducing new items that would grab the interest of the pickiest eaters. While some new menu items didn't always work for the guests, the menu

conformed to their guests with something for everyone.

The restaurant allows them to hear from their guests from the local community and to educate guests to the community and promote the town of Gretna. The goal is to be ambassadors and welcome everyone with open arms. Recently, Jeff and Kathy have invested in their local community, helping Gretna purchase a new sign for their arena. When Jeff and Kathy received a call from the Altona chamber of commerce congratulating them on winning the business excellent award, they were dumbfounded. With so many strong businesses in the area, Nora's Diner truly stands out among the best in the area.

It's businesses like these and business owners like Jeff and Kathy who help to create strong communities and help communities grow and prosper.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating the work of Jeff and Kathy Dyck, and—on the success of Nora's Diner.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Gordon Bell High School

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): On Monday, June 10th, a dream came true at Gordon Bell High School. In a beautiful ceremony, headlined by our Premier (Mr. Selinger), the entire school community celebrated the official opening of their long-sought and hard-won green space.

Principal Arlene Skull, who joins us here today at the Manitoba Legislature, hosted the joyous event. It brought out dignitaries from all levels of government, sports heroes from the past, present and future, donors, community supporters, and the entire student body, all of us dressed in our new school T-shirts—purple in colour, of course. It was enough to make the old feel young and the young feel old enough to accomplish anything they put their minds to. I even got to play in a short pick-up game of Ultimate Frisbee; thank goodness the students went easy on the guy with a ponytail and a business suit.

What made the day all the more special was the knowledge that our entire community made the green space a reality. The odds certainly weren't in our favour at the start. Canada Post had legally purchased the former car dealership right next to the school and needed it for a new mail distribution centre. This meant we had to find an alternative

location that they would agree to, find the money to buy the land from them and then find more money to transform this massive parking lot into a green space. And yet it still happened.

Led by the indomitable spirit of the students themselves, the entire school, including parents, staff and teachers, rallied to the cause. They marched, they rallied, held fundraisers, media events, then they marched and rallied some more. Sometimes, I joined them in the dead of winter. The story caught everyone's attention, this inner-city school, where the student body comes from all over the world, and speaks a total of over 50 languages, all working together for a common cause.

I was on the stage at Westminster United Church when local MP Pat Martin announced at the school graduation ceremony that, after extensive negotiations, Canada Post had, indeed, agreed to sell the land to Gordon Bell. The room exploded with a sound of pure joy that I am not going to forget anytime soon.

Some months later, the school gymnasium heard the same roar of approval when Manitoba's Education Minister announced the Province would provide \$3.8 million to buy the land, plus an additional one and a half million to help with redevelopment costs.

The school kicked its own fundraising into high gear and raised an additional half a million dollars, with \$50,000 of that coming from Principal Skull and her own family members. Together, we had done it.

Mr. Speaker, they say it takes a village to raise a child. Well, sometimes the children raise their own village to new heights of optimism and accomplishment. Anytime anyone in the Chamber needs some inspiration, I'd invite you to take a stroll down to the corner of Broadway and Portage Avenue, and you can dream all you want.

Relay for Life

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): This past Saturday morning, more than 350 Relay for Life participants finished a 12-hour overnight walk at the Keystone Centre in Brandon.

Teams gather and are composed of 10 to 15 people, who fundraise individually and as a team, to help the Canadian Cancer Society to help save lives and support those who are fighting cancer.

The reason the relay is held overnight is to represent and honour a cancer patient's journey. For the many Canadians who battle with cancer, the fight starts with the initial diagnosis, and continues throughout the days of treatment and the long nights that follow. This fundraising event is inspirational and brings the community together to celebrate life and the fight against cancer.

Mr. Speaker, a good friend at the event was shocked by my schedule and my travel time. She's a very giving individual and she has had an important influence on my life. She underwent surgery and chemotherapy this past year, and I had a tough time convincing her that what she went through was much more significant than what I do.

Mr. Speaker, my friend and 150 other cancer survivors and caregivers joined the relay participants last Friday evening. This was a great opportunity for members of the community to come together and take part in the many other activities present, which included face painting, boxing demonstrations, live musical performances and fireworks after the sun went down. These, paired with celebrations throughout the evening, were held to celebrate and remember those touched by cancer, and was culminated with the final Fight Back Ceremony, which took part just after 2 a.m., organized by the Canadian Cancer Society, who celebrates their 75th anniversary this year.

Mr. Speaker, this year's 12th annual Relay for Life has raised more than \$73,000. The event was such a success that next year's event is already under works for June 14th, 2014, and four teams have already signed up.

But this success and any in the future isn't possible without the help from volunteers with huge hearts. Members of the Brandon Rotary Club, the Brandon Police Service, and members of the Brandon fire emergency services, thank you for your help.

* (14:40)

With the end of the event on Saturday, so ends the tenure of the current Relay for Life Chair, Lutz Mattfeld, who has been organizing the event for three years. Jeremy Foidart will be taking over and I'm sure he will do a fantastic job.

I ask all members to join me to congratulate the organizers, volunteers and participants who took part in this year's Relay for Life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Construction of Amber Trails School

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, The Maples is one of the fastest growing constituencies in the province. As our neighborhoods grow, however, families need more school spaces for their children. I am proud that the Manitoba government supports building and improving schools in all parts of the province to meet these needs. The future Amber Trails school is just one such example.

Due to new housing developments, Seven Oaks School Division has experienced an enrolment increase by 2,000 students over the past six years. When the Amber Trails school opens in September 2015 it will accommodate 625 students with expansion possibilities for 800 students in the future. Located on the north side of Templeton Avenue just west of Pipeline Road, this modern school will serve kindergarten to grade 8 students from northwest Winnipeg and West St. Paul. It will feature much needed before and after school programs, 40 spaces for nursery and kindergarten students and a vital child-care centre for 64 infant and preschool students.

As a result of funding in Budget 2013 and from the Manitoba Building and Renewal Plan, construction is already under way. This 85,000-square-foot Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, LEED, gold standard school will be a provincial leader in sustainability. Just as I was at the sod turning with the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and Minister of Education (Ms. Allan), I am excited about visiting this school once it is open and ready to serve the community.

Families in The Maples and the staff at Seven Oaks School Division are very excited for this new school. It will alleviate issues of overcrowding and will provide students with a quality education. It will also be a wonderful place to work and will bring families together in this community gathering place. This is all very positive for us in The Maples.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Emergency Session

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the NDP approach to the emergency sitting of the Legislature which started this past Monday has so far been unusual, to say the least.

On Thursday, June 13th, the regular sitting time of the Legislature came to an end. The NDP acted immediately to recall the Legislature for June 17th to

start an emergency sitting. They've said the emergency sitting is to complete the Estimates, pass all the budget-related bills, to pass all the other bills and to ensure the government has enough money to pay employees.

The precedent set in 2003 and 2007 is that the completion of the Estimates and passage of bills including the budget bills can wait until the regular sitting dates starting in September. Thus, the completion of Estimates and the passage of the all the bills is not an emergency. Obtaining the warrants to pay government employees can be done without the emergency sitting.

The NDP argue that the Conservatives are responsible for delaying the business of the Legislature. It's true the Conservatives and Liberals want to stop the increase in the provincial sales tax, which is being done without a referendum which is legally required.

But it's also true that the Conservatives and Liberals want specific changes to how committees are run to ensure less chaos, more order and more respect for the citizens of Manitoba who want to present.

Properly functioning committee process is a critical sticking point. In the past, even with a large number of presenters, all are invited for the first evening. Thus, a hundred and fifty people or more can be invited the first evening even when only 25 to 30 are likely to have a chance to actually present to the committee that evening.

What's being proposed by Liberals and Conservatives is a scheduling of presenters so that 25 to 30 presenters are invited each evening so that they know they'll be able to present. This organization of operation of committees is long overdue. The NDP are opposing this change.

To date, the NDP have said they'll only consider a change to committee rules in the context to review of all the rules of the Legislature. They have not provided any such broader proposal for change. If the NDP want to make progress, it's time for them to come to the table and agree to changes in the way committees are run instead of trying to—and run an emergency sitting as if it were just an extension of the regular sitting.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances. No grievances, we'll move on with—

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you continue with debate on second reading of Bill 20, please.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call Bill 20, The Manitoba Building and Renewal Funding and Fiscal Management Act (Various Acts Amended), standing in the name of the honourable member for Steinbach, who has unlimited time.

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

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Yes, I want to just go over some of the introductory comments that I had to my speech yesterday, Mr. Speaker, as I was just laying out where we were going to be going in the upcoming days in terms of this debate on Bill 20. I started off yesterday by speaking about where we have been on this bill, and I would say we have been in uncharted waters, in a new territory, places that this Legislature, when it comes to legislation, have never been before. I've looked recently at the Order Paper, and when I see this bill still on there from April 16th, and when you take a look at how much has happened on this bill, on Bill 20, how many people have actually spoken to this bill, it's remarkable. And so I want to give just a bit of a review for the House.

This bill was moved on May 7th, Mr. Speaker. On that day, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) spoke to the bill, also, the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger). It was then the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) who spoke, the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen), member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen). On May 8th, the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) spoke. The member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) also spoke on May 8th, the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), for La Verendrye, and the member for Agassiz (Mr. Briese). On May 13th, still speaking to the reasoned amendment, we continued to hear from the member for Agassiz, the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon). The member for Emerson then continued on May 14th, along with the member for—I spoke to it, the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson). The member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) spoke to it as well on that day. We heard

from the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) on May 21st, the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) again, now speaking to the main motion, the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), and on it continued. And there's a pattern. There's a pattern within these names in that they only represent people on this side of the House. The government has been reluctant, has refused, to speak to this other than the opening comments by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers).

And so I spoke yesterday, Mr. Speaker, in the reasoned amendment—about the reasoned amendment, and how it is that this government hasn't been transparent, wasn't transparent in the prebudget consultation meetings, wasn't transparent in their advertising or in their own local reports, and haven't been transparent in this House. And the record is clear. And the record is here for all of us to see, that the government hasn't spoken to this bill, and they have not stood up for their constituents as we have stood up for Manitobans, as we have stood up for Manitobans and said, this is not fair or just. It is not necessary to increase the PST and it's not fair to take away their right to a referendum. That has been our message throughout this entire long debate.

And I know the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) spoke in his member's statement that this has been a long debate and that there has been delay. And, ultimately, Mr. Speaker, the delay, to the extent there has been in this House, is primarily the responsibility of the government for calling this House back so late in spring. Our job has been to stand up for Manitobans. Our job has been to reflect the priorities and the concerns of Manitobans about the PST increase and how it's being performed. And so I spoke about that yesterday.

I was beginning to speak about the discussion that we had on the hoist motion, Mr. Speaker, when my time ran out yesterday, and I was disappointed that the time ran out at that particular time, as I was giving the government some ideas, some ideas of how they could have used those six months to go and speak to Manitobans around the province about their decision to not only increase the PST, but to take away the referendum.

* (14:50)

And as I was concluding my comments yesterday, I was talking about the great festivals and fairs that we have in the province of Manitoba, and what an opportunity that would have afforded the

government to go and meet with Manitobans, not only of different interests, as is reflected in the different community festivals that we're fortunate to have in this province, but also as reflected in the variety of people who go to these events. I started off talking about the Winnipeg International Jazz Festival and the Red River Ex which is ongoing right now.

And I was speaking at the end of my comments yesterday about the Manitoba Highland Gathering and the great folks that would be at that particular event. That takes place in Selkirk, and I know the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) who is often interested in speaking and—or, at least—not speaking. He doesn't want to actually put any words in the record, but he waves and makes head gestures, Mr. Speaker, as others are speaking. He might be able to go to this event in his own community had the hoist motion been approved, and gone to speak to these Manitobans—[interjection] Well, and I'm glad to hear that the member for Selkirk has told me that he is going to go to this great event, and I hope he goes with an open mind, because it's not enough just to show up.

It's not enough just to go and to try to give the message of the government, to try to tell people what they should believe or what they should think. Our job—and he's not demonstrated it in this House, Mr. Speaker, in his comments on the record. He's made some comments off the record, but he's not stood up and said that he is going to go with an open mind and listen to Manitobans. And that's what I would encourage him to do as he goes to the Highland Gathering, which he's indicated to me that he will, that he'll go with an open mind and with ears wide open to listen to those Manitobans and to ask them—you know, I don't want to give him too many suggestions, but he could set up a booth, I suppose.

Often at these festivals, you have the opportunity to set up a booth and to talk to people. He could set up a booth, it could say his name at the top, the member for Selkirk, and it could say, tell us what you think about the PST. It wouldn't be quite like the Pepsi Challenge; I've seen those sometimes at the fairs where you had to, you know—blindfolded and you choose what you think is the Pepsi product, Mr. Speaker. But it would be a test nonetheless, and you could go and you could determine and listen to people about whether or not they thought the PST was a good idea or a bad idea.

And I don't want to presuppose what the results would be, Mr. Speaker, from the fine folks at this

event, but I would venture a guess—I wouldn't wager—that the vast majority of the people, who'd be at that festival where the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) says he's going to be, would come up to that booth and tell him that they are opposed to the PST increase. So that's my challenge to him and I look forward to hearing the results of that when he comes back.

Now, I note also that from June 27th to June 30th is the Dauphin country festival. It's described in the travel guide as incredible country music for some of the hottest stars in the business. Now, I admit to you, Mr. Speaker, that's not my genre of music, so I'm not going to try to describe who the hottest stars are. I think Taylor Swift, actually, is one of the big country stars.

I think it might be a Taylor slow on the way to way to the stadium, on the weekend as people go to the event. I'm not sure how they're getting there—hopefully they will helicopter in Taylor Swift, because I'm not sure if she'd be able to get there otherwise, Mr. Speaker, but that's whole different debate. I don't want to be irrelevant.

But I would hope that the members would consider taking this message to the Dauphin country festival in the home constituency of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers). He could visit the many guests who would be coming from around Manitoba and talk to them. The Minister of Finance himself, I'm sure that he'll have some sort of a position there or he'll be welcome there as being the local MLA. And he could go and he could use that opportunity to speak to individuals, to speak to those in the organization community, those who are attending the event and ask them as the Minister of Finance, what do you think of increasing the PST and taking away the referendum? And it would've been easier for him to do that had we put the hoist motion through, because it would've allowed him a bit more time, a little bit less stress on him as he was making that decision and making the argument—or making the conversation with people at that festival. And so, it's not too late, Mr. Speaker. I understand that festival will be taking place a little bit later on this month, and the Minister of Finance and—not only can he, I'm sure, listen to some great country music, but he can also listen to the great opinions of Manitobans.

In fact, I venture to guess that he would probably meet many people from Saskatchewan at that event, because it's near the border—the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border. And he would have a lot of people coming over from the Saskatchewan

border to the Dauphin CountryFest, and they would have opinions. Now, those people who are business people in Saskatchewan would probably support the Minister of Finance's decision to increase the PST because that will help them economically in Saskatchewan.

Now, I remember the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) saying during one of his comments earlier in this debate that if their lights were so bright in Saskatchewan, then maybe everybody should go to Saskatchewan. That seemed to be the opinion of the government, of the Minister of Agriculture, encouraging Manitobans to pack up their bags and to put all of their belongings on a U-Haul and head off to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That seems to be the economic action plan of the Manitoba government, is to ship everybody off to Saskatchewan.

So the member for Dauphin would have this opportunity at the festival at the Dauphin CountryFest to go and to talk to Manitobans there and to people from Saskatchewan. So he would get a variety of opinions, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, from people in two jurisdictions.

Later on this summer, July 10th to the 14th, is the Winnipeg Folk Festival, an internationally acclaimed celebration of people in music featuring over 60 acts and six daytime stages. Well, he wouldn't probably be able to get to the daytime stages, Mr. Speaker. I expect that we're going to be still sitting here during those days. But there'll be opportunity in the evening for any of the government members to go out to the Winnipeg Folk Festival, and you'll get a different group of people, I think, who probably attend the folk festival as who attend the Dauphin CountryFest, though.

And that's what this is all about, getting a diversity of opinion on Bill 20, Mr. Speaker, getting a wide variety of opinion from Manitobans, because the referendum, of course, would have been the most ideal place to get that wide variety of opinion. It would have been the most salient place to find out what Manitobans think and you would have gotten the most democratic form of democracy through that.

But this is not a close second, but it's an alternative. It certainly wouldn't have been an alternative had the government agreed to the hoist motion that we brought forward, and the different ministers could have attended the folk festival and in between the different acts they could have asked those questions and asked individuals what they thought of the PST tax increase.

I know, also, and I've been invited, actually, to attend a couple of the acts at the Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival happening in Winnipeg from July 17th to the 28th. Always great entertainment, Mr. Speaker, some variety of different acts. They come from all over the country and they draw a variety of people with a lot of different interests in a lot of different things. And had the government agreed to the hoist motion on the PST increase it would have given them a wonderful opportunity to go to this particular festival and say to people, now that we've held over the legislation—the legislation wasn't in effect and wouldn't be in effect for at least six months—to ask their opinion whether or not they think it's a good idea to increase the PST on literally thousands of different items and to ask their opinion on whether or not it's a good idea to take away the referendum from so many Manitobans.

One of the festivals that's near and dear to my heart is the Manitoba Stampede, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if you've had the opportunity to attend. I'd encourage all members who haven't been able to attend that event to do so, that it is a unique opportunity to see unique events. There's a midway there. Of course, there's exhibitions within the stampede itself. I haven't had the opportunity to attend with my son since he's been born, but I should, and I think he'd probably enjoy it. They sometimes have the politicians go and do what's called sheep herding at the event. It's not, maybe, the most dignified thing that we do as politicians, but it's fun and we end up trying to both herd the sheep, and they also have, I think, a sheep-tying contest, but that's probably something we don't want to get into.

But the—ultimately, it's a great opportunity for the government, had we agreed to the hoist motion, to go out to Morris and to meet with the fine folks who are not only in the—living in the community of Morris, but who are visiting. And they do come from all over Canada, and they could have asked them the impact on the stampede of the PST tax increase because there would have been a significant increase, I think—or impact on those who are attending the stampede. It would have had an impact on them.

And it allows me the opportunity to say while I'm just on that vein, Mr. Speaker, that we are disappointed that the government has not called a by-election in Morris at this point. Maybe while the members are out there, maybe the by-election will have been called by then. We can hope. But, if not, they could ask the people who are in Morris why they hadn't called a by-election, why there still

wasn't an MLA in place to replace the former MLA that they had, Mavis Taillieu, who was a great MLA. They could've—they could ask the people in Morris why they should call a by-election and I think that they would tell them because it's important to have representation.

* (15:00)

And it's a pattern I think, really, Mr. Speaker, that ties into Bill 20 because not only is the government taking away a democratic right for representation by taking away the referendum through Bill 20, but while they were out at the Morris Stampede they could talk about how they're not being very democratic by not having the by-election.

So they could kill, proverbially, two birds with one stone. Talk about the PST tax increase, get people's opinions on that, and I think the vast majority of people in the community of Morris and those who are visiting Morris for the festival, the stampede, that weekend would say that the PST increase is unnecessary and that it's harming Manitobans, that there are other ways that they could find revenue, Mr. Speaker. And at the same time they could ask the good folks, the residents of Morris, whether or not they think it's important to have that by-election called, and I think the vast majority of them would say it is important.

I know that I've gotten emailed and I'm sure some of my colleagues have, and probably some members of the government from individuals who live in that constituency who are looking for some help from their MLA and they contact neighbouring MLAs because their MLA—the position hasn't been filled, Mr. Speaker, that they are still waiting. And I know that'll be confirmed by the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) and I'm sure it'll be confirmed by the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook), Midland and others, that, as a result of the government not calling the by-election, we have the residents of those areas calling to other MLAs. And I mean, we, of course, are happy to help where we can. That is something we take willingly but it's not ideal. It's less than ideal to not have somebody in place who is their own dedicated MLA. So that is an opportunity certainly for the government to go out to that festival.

I also want to mention that on July 19th to the 21st there's the world Lily Festival, Mr. Speaker. Now this is a festival I've not had the opportunity to attend but it's in Neepawa, the great constituency of

Neepawa, and I'm sure that my friend, the MLA who represents that area in the constituency of Agassiz, would happily take the government out to the festival and to bring them around, take the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers)—I don't think it's far from his own home—and to go and ask individuals who are attending that festival, whether it's a good idea to increase the PST. And I'm sure that the words that he'd be getting back from the people attending the Lily Festival is it's a bad idea. It's not necessary. It's harmful to Manitoba families. Government should be looking internally for savings first. Government should be looking at their own shop first before going to Manitobans and saying, we're going to take more money from you; we're going to come to your kitchen table and take more money out of your household before looking internally.

That, I think, would be the message that the government would get in Neepawa.

And had they taken the hoist motion, Mr. Speaker, had they agreed to that hoist motion, they would've been able to do that. They would've had a bit more time. We would've allowed the government time, the minister from—the member from Dauphin, the Minister of Finance, to attend the festival and to get those opinions. I know that the—and, of course, I—it's mentioned by the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) that the mayor of Neepawa, I'm sure, would've gladly told the members opposite that the PST increase isn't necessary. The mayor for Neepawa is known to be outspoken and not short of—shy to express his opinions and to speak on behalf of the good people of Neepawa. It's why he was elected mayor of Neepawa, and I'm sure that he would be more than willing to speak to the government and to tell them the problems of the PST.

It's notable, Mr. Speaker, that on July 25th to the 28th that the Manitoba Threshermen's Reunion and Stampede. I know it's an event located in Austin that is of good significance to a number of people within our caucus and perhaps within the government caucus as well, and you would get a different opinion there than—well, you'd get the same opinion, but from different folks. A cross-section of Manitobans is what I'm trying to get the government to do by visiting a number of different places and a number of different festivals or—and had they gone to Austin and had they—and should they go to Austin and listen to the Manitobans at the Threshermen's Reunion and Stampede, I think the message would be clear. Many of them would've come from the agricultural community. A lot of them I'm sure would still be in

the agriculture field, would still be working as farmers, others would've been retired. That would've been something that they would have done in their life when they were still in their working years.

And they would have that common sense; they would have the common sense of individuals who had worked the land, who had worked in agriculture, who know how hard it is to make a dollar, who know how tight those margins are in the agriculture field, who know that it's difficult to make a living not only in that occupation, but in a lot of other occupations. They would know the input costs have gone up significantly in agriculture and that the price that we often see in the store isn't reflective of what's being given to people at the gate, those who are working the land, those who are in the livestock industry.

So I would encourage the government to consider going to that particular festival, and they should have done it under the notion of having a hoist motion in place and this bill not before the Legislature right now.

Now, the Manitoba Sunflower Festival, which takes place in Altona, I believe, every year. It will be taking place from July 26th to July 28th this year, Mr. Speaker. I've had the opportunity to go out, go to Altona, for the Sunflower Festival, and it's a wonderful festival. The member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), who, I think, represents that area, is—has an open invitation, as he often does. He's a very hospitable fellow, and he's inviting the government to come out to Altona and to talk to Manitobans about the PST tax increase. He would prefer that they hold this bill over, that it not be before the Legislature while he does that, but he's willing to take them to Altona and to meet with those fine folks and the many Manitobans who travel to Altona for that festival and to talk to them.

Now, Canada's National Ukrainian Festival will be August 2nd to 4th, and that's also located in Dauphin. So here's a second opportunity, Mr. Speaker, for the Minister of Finance to go and to meet with not only his own constituents, but also those who are travelling from parts of Manitoba and other parts of Canada to come to the community. And this is a great opportunity for him to go and to ask these individuals who are attending that festival what they feel about the PST tax increase and to bring that message back not with the bill being debated before the Legislature had the hoist motion been approved. It would have made more sense for the government to have taken a bit of a break from

trying to push through Bill 20 and listening to Manitobans at an event like this in Dauphin.

I—one that's close to my heart, and I'll put this out as an offer for a number of the government members, is Steinbach's Pioneer Days. Mr. Speaker, we had a wonderful Summer in the City that took place last weekend. I know that the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Chief) was actually at Summer in the City and he was performing with a group that he performs with and we welcomed him there, but this could be a different opportunity during Pioneer Days for members of the government, and I would invite them.

I would invite all of them. I'd invite the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux), who doesn't live far from the community. We could walk the street together and talk to individuals about the PST tax increase. The member for Dawson Trail and I, we could visit the museum. I'd buy him a meal. I don't think that's against our conflict of interest rules. In fact, my mother works at the museum and she works in the restaurant there and I'm sure she'd be happy to provide him with a good meal during Steinbach's Pioneer Days, but we would be more than just a pleasure visit. Although, we—always good to mix in a little bit of pleasure anyway when you're going to these events, Mr. Speaker, but there'd be business involved too, because part of the business would be about asking the people who come from all over Manitoba to the Pioneer Days festival about how they feel about that PST tax increase, how they feel about the government taking away their referendum.

And the museum in Steinbach, Mr. Speaker, is very much a testament to democracy. It's very much about new people who came to—new Canadians who came to Manitoba, the Mennonites in the late 1800s, and they came looking for democracy. They came fleeing countries, in many cases, that didn't have democratic rights that we sometimes take for granted, and I think that they would be concerned. They would be very upset to learn and to hear what this government is doing, taking away the referendum right that many people have come to expect before the government would have the ability to increase the PST or increase personal income taxes or increase other taxes that are major taxes like corporate taxes.

*(15:10)

And so we could do that together, and I'd be happy to host any of the members of the

government—maybe not all of them, Mr. Speaker. I only have so and so much I'd want to purchase in terms of food for the members. But I'd take some of them and I think that they would get—

An Honourable Member: Mr. Speaker first.

Mr. Goertzen: I would certainly take the Speaker, and I want to again echo the great respect we have for you, Mr. Speaker. I think you're on your way to distinguishing yourself as one of the fine Speakers of this Legislature.

But I would be happy to take any of the members opposite to the festival in Steinbach, the Pioneer Days, and we would have those great discussions with Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, who are coming there and asking whether or not the government will change their mind on a PST increase.

Now, I think almost all members of this House will likely attend Folklorama from August 4th to the 17th, Canada's cultural celebration. And it's not only a great opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to see how different people in the world—their cultures, that all come to Winnipeg, those who live in Winnipeg or many who travel to Winnipeg for Folklorama.

It's a wonderful opportunity to learn about different cultures and the different traditions that they have. I learn every year when I go to the different pavilions about how different cultures celebrate different things in—within their own cultures and within different parts of the world.

And what better opportunity to talk to a cross-section of Manitobans about the PST increase, what better opportunity is there than Folklorama for this government to go and to speak to Manitobans of all different backgrounds, of all different heritages, Mr. Speaker, to find out what they think of the PST increase. And to find out what they think of doing away with the referendum.

And I know that there'd be many new Canadians there, Mr. Speaker, many new people to Manitoba. And when I've talked to new Canadians they are particularly distressed about the removal of the referendum, because they've seen in their own countries—in more extreme circumstances, I acknowledge—but they've seen in their own country what happens when you have the loss of freedoms, when you have the loss of democratic freedoms. And the removal of the referendum is certainly a loss—it is certainly a democratic loss.

And I think that you would find when you talk to the different individuals who are visiting the different pavilions, if the government would ask them about the PST tax increase, that they would find out, Mr. Speaker, that Manitobans are concerned, that Manitobans don't agree with the government's decision.

Now, after the Folklorama, Mr. Speaker, we have the Winkler Harvest Festival which is August 9th to 11—*[interjection]* And I barely had said the words and I heard the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen) expressing great support for that particular festival.

It's another festival I've had the opportunity to attend, and I already hear the extension of invitation from the member for Morden-Winkler who wants to invite the government members to come out to his community and to hear from these Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, about the PST increase and about the removal of the referendum.

Now, I recognize because that is in August—August 9th to 11th, we'll probably still be sitting here as a Legislature, Mr. Speaker, all—and they might not be available to go to every event. But a lot of these take place on the weekend, and so government members could travel out to Winkler. I know a lot of the government members never get beyond the Perimeter and they don't know how to drive in rural in Manitoba, but we'd be happy to support them and help them find their way outside of the Perimeter.

We could bring them out to Winkler, to any of these other events which take place outside of the city of Winnipeg. And we could introduce them to many fine folks who would have lots of ideas for them about the PST increase and why it's bad for Manitoba and Manitobans. But there'd be more credibility, Mr. Speaker, in that discussion had the government agreed to the hoist motion when it was proposed.

Not to give too much credit or put too much on the plate—the member for Morden-Winkler—but, of course, there's the Morden Corn and Apple Festival which takes place August 23rd to August 25th, Mr. Speaker. This is a highlight for many people who like attending rural festivals. My son is already talking about going to the Morden Corn and Apple Festival—he loves the fresh corn that comes out of the boilers.

I know that the former member for the constituency of Pembina was always very involved

with serving corn and I'm sure that the member—the current member for Morden-Winkler will be doing the same. And so we'll see him out on the streets of Morden-Winkler serving up that free, fresh corn, Mr. Speaker.

And what an opportunity for the government to come and to talk to Manitobans and to hear from them. They'd be given some free corn and some free apple cider, Mr. Speaker. They can jump on a bus and take a tour of Morden.

But more importantly than that—not that that's not important, but maybe more importantly for the government is that they could hear from individuals within that community and within that region. They could hear from them about how harmful it is to see the PST go up, Mr. Speaker. They can hear from them about the democratic rights being taken away by the referendum being taken out by Bill 20.

I know—now this looks—this might sound a little unoptimistic, Mr. Speaker, but it is possible we could still be sitting here on November 29th, and that's when Canada—the Canad Inns Winter Wonderland starts up. Now, if we're still sitting here on November 29th, I think, by that time our tempers might be a little bit frayed, but we might need some time away from the House. If we still are sitting here on November 29th we might want to head out to the Canad Inns Winter Wonderland. I—this is a family tradition for me. Every year we load up the car and we buy one of the passes that you can get at Mac's Convenience Stores at a discount, because I'm always looking for a discount and you can get them at a discount than if you buy them at the gate. And you can drive through the—and see all the lights and the dancing deer that go over top the cars.

But, more importantly, Mr. Speaker, what would be an opportunity for the government there, on that late date in November of this year, is they could still hear from Manitobans. And I think even six months from now, even after or before Christmas you'll hear people who are still upset about the PST. Now, my hope, of course, is that the government would have withdrawn the bill and would have withdrawn the PST increase by then. But, if they haven't, if they've been charging by that point for six months the additional PST point of 8 per cent, I think even then, in November at what was otherwise a festive event, they would be hearing the concerns from Manitobans. Manitobans would still, in November, be expressing how disappointed they are that the government was raising the PST. But it would give

them another opportunity and, again, this is something we could all do together. We could, I don't know, want to suggest recess the House any time early, but it gets dark early in November, so we wouldn't necessarily have to. And we could head out and we could all go and look at the lights and then talk to the Manitobans as they drove by about the PST increase. And I think that they would still say—and maybe particularly after the shopping season, because so many Manitobans will have paid so much more because of the increase in the PST if the government doesn't change their minds.

There's a number of different points—when kids are going back to school in September there's going to be a lot more money paid out by parents. And maybe would be something that'll be of interest to the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan), that parents are going to have to pay so much more for school supplies and to get their kids ready for school, and they're certainly going to feel it during those months while their kids are getting ready to go back to school. At Christmastime, of course, during that shopping season many people are going to be paying a lot more for the presents and the different gifts that they have to give during the Christmas season, Mr. Speaker.

So really, at any time, I think, over the next six months, had that hoist motion been approved, would have been a good time for the government to go out and speak to Manitobans and, ultimately, I think this is the failing; the failing of this government is they were not consulting and that this was an exercise in opportunity, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to list through a number of different opportunities that the government would have, a number of different places where they could, in fact, go and speak to Manitobans. They refuse to do it through a referendum. That's their choice and one I don't support. But I wanted to show them that there are so many places that if they wanted to, and if they went with an open mind and open ears and a willingness to listen, that they could hear from many, many Manitobans.

And I think overwhelmingly the response that they would get, whether they were in Dauphin or at the event in Selkirk, whether or not they were in Steinbach, in Morden, in Winnipeg at the various events, I think that they would get a uniform response from Manitobans, and that response would be that they are upset and concerned about the PST tax increase. They don't believe that the government couldn't find savings internally. They don't believe

that the government is spending wisely, Mr. Speaker. We hear more and more Manitobans refer to the government as the spendDP because they know that this government is simply spending money without results.

We heard today the member from Morden-Winkler talk about how he'd only had one midwife trained in seven years, Mr. Speaker, one—one—in seven years. I mean, you know, I guess the only thing worse could have been none, I suppose.

* (15:20)

But, I mean, this is a government that trumpets these different announcements. This is a government that talks about spending millions and millions of dollars on programs for one midwife. Manitobans would look at that and go, we're not getting the results for money that's going in. And so, when the government tries to justify the PST tax increase by saying that there are more programs or more things that have to be paid for, it's not surprising that Manitobans get skeptical, that Manitobans say, well, you know, you told us that before, but look at the results. Where are the results? And that's just one example that was raised in question period.

I want to talk a little about, I think, some of the hurdles that we're having here in this debate. And one of the reasons, I think, that we're not able to see the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) and the government—and the Premier (Mr. Selinger), of course, because, ultimately, the Premier is the head of the government and he takes ultimate responsibility—but I think one of the problems that we have is that we have a government that isn't willing to admit mistakes, that it's a government that has a very, very difficult time admitting when they are wrong. And this is a, perhaps, a by-product of the government being in government for a long time. We recognize that they've been in government for a number of years, and we continue to hear from Manitobans that they believe that it is likely time for a change in Manitoba, that they're looking for a change.

Now, we don't have an election, of course, for at least a couple of years, so that change in our democratic system can't come maybe as quickly as some Manitobans would want, Mr. Speaker, and, ultimately, Manitobans will make the decision. We always respect the decision that they make at the ballot box. But I think that they would expect that for whatever length of time this government has left in

office, that it would be a government that would be willing to admit mistakes, that it would be a government that would be willing to admit when they were wrong. And I think that is probably one of the problems that we have here.

Mr. Speaker, no doubt before the budget was introduced on April 17th the government came together and—I'm sorry, on April 16th, I think, I misspoke—when the government was meeting with the ministers, or perhaps even with their caucus maybe an hour or so before the budget was announced, and they were talking about the PST tax increase, I'm sure they had a strategy for how they were going to sell it. They would have known there was going to be some resistance, of course. But I'm sure they said, well, we've raised taxes by extraordinary amounts in the past, and so raising taxes by an extraordinary amount this budget, we can find our way through it. We can come up with a strategy to ensure that we're not damaged politically. I'm sure that discussion happened. And this is part of the problem because we've—when a government's been there so long, is they really become out of touch with people and out of touch with the expectations of Manitobans.

And, however that discussion took place, I know that the government, the senior members of that government—whether it's the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) or the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), who've been here in the Legislature for a long time—they would have tried to rally the other members and tell them how this was going to be a justifiable—and sellable to Manitobans. And I'm sure some of the newer members of the NDP now look with some discouragement on those senior members when they've seen what's actually happened. I'm sure they'll be more skeptical next time when those senior members tell them something about how things will happen in terms of a policy in the Province of Manitoba, and they should, because, clearly, they were wrong.

If the member for Kildonan was standing up in his caucus and saying how this PST increase would be completely justifiable to Manitobans, it'll be something we can sell, we've just got to ride out a little bit of turbulence—if that was the message from the member for Thompson to the members of the NDP caucus, I think, now, that many of the new members for a caucus, even though they would have a difficult time admitting it, I recognize, would say that they were misled, that it hasn't turned out that way, because Manitobans have reacted very strongly.

Manitobans have become—[interjection]—they've become, I wouldn't want to say irate, Mr. Speaker, because I know that Manitobans are slow to become angry, but they are certainly frustrated. They are certainly frustrated. They are paying attention, as the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) acknowledges. That's been acknowledged by many in the media, that the government has arisen the attention of the public, and not in a positive way.

And so I'm sure when that discussion was happening within the caucus prior to the budget being announced, Mr. Speaker, on April 16th, those members of the caucus, perhaps even the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), stood up and said: Don't worry, we're going to message this. We've got 192 communicators on our side and we're going to message through this. We're going to find a way to tell them—well, first we'll tell them that there's going to be a flood this spring.

And then, of course, the flood didn't actually happen this spring. And then we're going to tell them that it is necessary for all sorts of things that we've said we've already were going to do over the last 10 years. But don't try—don't worry. We'll try to spin them that way, and then maybe we'll try to wrap in the federal government. And they've tried all of those things.

They've tried all of them, and they might be wondering why it's not working; why we're still having rallies in the front of the Legislature; why we're still debating on this bill; why there are still editorials—one today in the Free Press, Mr. Speaker. An article was in the Winnipeg Sun, as well, about the damage from the PST tax increase. They must be wondering, where did the 192 communicators go? How did they let us down?

But, ultimately, it's the government that let itself down, because they lost touch—they lost touch somewhere along the way, Mr. Speaker, with the priorities of Manitobans. They've lost touch about what Manitobans actually feel. And Manitobans understand clearly that they have to manage their own affairs and finances appropriately, and they expect others to do that as well.

But now we've hit this hurdle where the Minister of Finance, the member for Dauphin, and the Premier (Mr. Selinger), the member for St. Boniface, refuse to admit that they've made a mistake. They refuse to go back and admit that they've done something wrong, Mr. Speaker. And I always think that it's unfortunate when individuals in elected

office have made a mistake, when they're not willing to admit that mistake.

We passed legislation here not too long ago, brought forward, I think, by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), who in his job outside the Legislature was, of course, trained as a doctor, and it was called The Apology Act, Mr. Speaker. And the premise behind that act was that medical professionals should be able to apologize and say they're sorry for something that's happened within the context of their professional duties without having that apology used against them in a legal way, used against them in a civil suit, and that made common sense. And I think that Manitobans, when they heard about that act—more than, I think, two or three years ago—they said, well, that makes a lot of sense, that being able to say you're sorry or admitting a mistake shouldn't necessarily be held against you.

And I think the problem with this government is that they believe that if they admit to this mistake, that if they admit that raising the PST and taking away the referendum was a mistake, that it would be held against them, Mr. Speaker.

And maybe they're past the point of no return already at this stage of the game. Maybe because they've dug their heels in so far, Mr. Speaker, that the public would be less likely to—that the government would be less likely—or the public would be less likely to give the government a pass if they admitted that—a mistake.

But I still think it would be the right thing to do. I still think it would be right for the government and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) to stand up in this House, along with the Premier (Mr. Selinger), and acknowledge that it was the wrong decision and to go back to the drawing board, to sharpen their pencils. And I've heard the Minister of Finance, the member for Dauphin, use that term before—to go back to the drawing board and say, how is it that we can find savings internally before we take money from Manitobans, and to admit that they made a mistake on Bill 20.

And I do think that there would be a segment of the population, although it's—again, it's been a little while now—but I do think there'd be a segment of the population who would give some credit to the Minister of Finance, who would—might still be a little skeptical of their management abilities, might still be a little skeptical of their motives, Mr. Speaker, but would say to the government, well, we're glad that

you admitted the mistake; we are glad that you said that you were wrong.

Now, I did a bit of research, Mr. Speaker, on admitting mistakes and some of the barriers for people to admitting when they've made a mistake, and I just want to go through some of that because it might be helpful as we try to get the government to change their mind on Bill 20.

I refer to a—an article that was written by Phil Holberton, and it is entitled "Gaining respect by admitting mistakes", Mr. Speaker, and I just want to read a little bit of it. It says, our first response when confronting a mistake is to deny it or to make up an excuse.

* (15:30)

Now, I want to spend a bit of time on that particular point that's raised by the author. He says that generally the first response when confronting a mistake is to deny it or to make up an excuse, and isn't that exactly what has happened with this government. In many ways they denied, first of all, ever making a promise not to raise taxes. Of course, they were confronted with the video evidence of that, and we have video evidence of the Premier not only saying that he wasn't going to raise taxes, but specifically saying that he wasn't going to raise the PST. And so that was sort of the first offence of the government in some ways, to maybe deny that they ever said that or that that wasn't really what they meant, or when they were talking about priorities they meant something else, but then, of course, there was irrefutable evidence in the form of a video tape.

But the other portion of this that is alluded to by Mr. Holberton is that, when confronting a mistake, the other response, first response, is to make up an excuse, and that's clearly what this government did when they made the mistake of increasing the PST or bringing forward Bill 20 to increase the PST, is to make up an excuse. And later on in my comments, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to have the opportunity to go through some of the excuses that the government brought forward when talking about or deciding to raise the PST. But it was certainly their first response—or one of their first responses was to make up excuses.

The first excuse that I already alluded to was that there was an imminent flood risk. Now, we know from those who travelled up and down the border, Mr. Speaker, or to the border, that there wasn't an

awful lot of snowpack during the time that the government was saying there was an imminent flood risk. We knew from reports further south that there seemed to be a good progress on the melt and it seemed to be happening at the right time and in the right way. The indicators weren't that bad. It's not that there wasn't some risk. There's always some risk of a flood in Manitoba every spring, but if the criteria for increasing the PST was that there was some risk of a flood, well, we'd increase the PST every year because there's always some risk of a flood in Manitoba. But that's not the criteria, and so the government used the excuse of an imminent flood to try to justify increasing the provincial sales tax from 7 to 8 per cent.

Now, we know what happened there. The government quickly opened up a series of flood emergency response offices, Mr. Speaker. They had a couple of ads that were run in the major newspapers and then only a few days later they closed those offices down. We know that they were putting out news releases and having statements on the flood and telling everybody that doom and gloom was coming. We heard from the reeve of Morris who indicated, in fact, that that wasn't the case. They indicated, in fact, that we shouldn't just be looking at the worst case scenario, that there are actually a lot of positive indicators in terms of what would be happening with the flood. And, certainly, the reeve of Morris is someone who knows a little bit about flooding because they deal with it almost every year and so it was left to him to try to instill a little bit more balance in the discussion for his own residence. But that's not what we had from the government. We had from the government running around saying the sky is falling, the sky is falling. There's so much water coming. We don't know what we're going to do. We're going to have to raise taxes to protect people.

And then, of course, we know, Mr. Speaker, at some point on—I think it was a Friday afternoon or late on a day, government put out a news release that the crest had passed and it was over, that the flood had never really come. And then we were all kind of looking at each other and wondering, well, what happened to all the prognostications of bad things that were going to happen in terms of the flood, in terms of why they had to increase the PST. None of them came to fruition, and so that was one of the excuses that the government came forward with.

Well, and then the second excuse we know of that the government brought forward was that they

had to bring in the increase to the PST, Mr. Speaker, because of the federal program, because of the federal budget on infrastructure. And I want to commend, first of all, the federal government in terms of their commitment to infrastructure. In fact, this is a federal government that I think has been—has given more to provinces in terms of transfer payments than any federal government in the history of Canada. Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his regional ministers across the country have made an unprecedented commitment to the provinces to ensure that there were not cuts in times that may have been difficult, And, in fact, through the history of this government's mandate, all they've really seen is increases to transfers and sometimes record increases to transfers. Quite different from the 1990s when the federal Liberal government was cutting by record amounts transfer payments to the provinces. A stark contrast to what we saw from the federal Liberal government.

But that was one of the excuses that the government brought forward in terms of why Bill 20 was necessary. And when you really look at how much money the government has received from the—provincial government has received from the federal government, you would know that that is an excuse that doesn't hold up, that doesn't hold water, Mr. Speaker, so to speak, that is invalid, because there are record transfer payments that have come from the federal government.

And I have had the opportunity to speak to our regional minister, Mr. Toews, and he has put out public statements in our media, not just the local media from the area that he represents, but in the Winnipeg Free Press and in the Winnipeg Sun, about the record transfer payments that are coming to Manitoba, about how much more money Manitoba is getting from the federal government than they've ever gotten before. And so, to use that as an excuse was simply wrong, but not surprising, because, again referring back to the article, Mr. Holberton acknowledges and says that the first response when confronting a mistake is to deny or to make up an excuse. And that was the first response of the government—to make up an excuse.

The other excuse they use, of course, is the global economic situation, Mr. Speaker. Now, we all recognize that since 2007 there have been some difficult economic times for different countries in the world, whether you're talking in Europe or we know what our friends in the United States went through because of the devaluation of land prices. And that

precipitated a lot of mortgages not being able to be paid upon, and we know that some of the mortgages that were being taken out in the United States prior to 2007 were not on solid financial ground. I had the opportunity to work at one point in my life at the Steinbach Credit Union, a great financial institution. So I know a little bit about lending practices and what the appropriate ratios are and—not only for the financial institution for itself, but also for those who are on the consumer or commercial end of lending.

And so, when you look at some of the lending instruments that were happening prior to 2007 now, in hindsight, of course, now that it's all been fully disclosed, it was clear that that was gonna end up in a situation where there was gonna be multiple calls, Mr. Speaker, and it was going to be difficult for many companies to survive that. And we saw that. Of course, many consumers then who were down the pipeline of this also got swept away from that, and many people ended up under water in terms of their mortgage because the value of their home was so much less than the value that they had taken out. But that goes back to 2007, and that, of course, is the—sort of the scenario in the United States. And we saw some different scenarios in different countries in Europe.

But, when you look back to 2007 and onward, you can see, I believe, that the revenues of this government, of the provincial government, have been significantly changed, Mr. Speaker. I think that there was one year where the revenues declined between 2007 and this year, and yet this government uses it an excuse. They say that one of the reasons that they're having challenges is still because of what happened in 2007, but the revenue story tells a different story. It doesn't appear that way. Now, part of that is, of course, some of the own-source revenue for the government, some of the own-source revenue for the Province of Manitoba, but a large part of that is because the federal government has ensured that their commitment to this province and to the other provinces in Canada has remained strong. So that excuse didn't hold, as I mentioned before.

But, on the issue of economic uncertainty, Mr. Speaker, I think you can argue that Manitoba is one of the most certain economies in Canada. And that's been the case before this government. It's been the case during this government. And it'll likely be the case during future governments. We do have a stable economy. It's a predictable economy. It becomes more predictable because so much money comes

from the federal government, but it is predictable, of course, because of the diversity of the province itself.

* (15:40)

And so, when you look at the prebudget consultation meetings and the slides that were presented, in fact, the government acknowledged that. The government themselves acknowledged, Mr. Speaker, that there was great predictability, that there was a stable nature to the Manitoba economy. And yet we heard a different excuse from this government, from the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) and from the Premier (Mr. Selinger). They came forward with a completely different excuse. The excuse was that they had to increase the PST because of global economic uncertainty because things had changed in the economic world and yet that isn't what is borne out on the books in Manitoba. That's not the story that we get in Manitoba.

And so that excuse didn't work and it didn't hold and didn't stand the test of time. So, when I refer back, Mr. Speaker, to Mr. Holberton's article and he indicates that one of the problems for people in terms of admitting mistakes is that their first response is to make up an excuse, that was one of the excuses that we saw from this government.

The other excuse that we saw, in terms of doing away with the referendum, Mr. Speaker, is that the government said that there was a too high of a cost to a referendum, that that was a new excuse that they needed to pull out, the referendum was too costly. I think I even heard the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) talk about that in one of his speeches, that a referendum would be too costly to hold in Manitoba.

Now, I mean, if you extend that logic, Mr. Speaker, you'd never even have a general election, you wouldn't have by-elections. I mean there is a cost to democracy and I think we all understand that. There's a cost to the Legislature, there's a cost for MLAs, there's a cost for support staff. And those are costs that are borne within a democracy because people see the benefit of those costs, they see it as better than the alternative, they see it as better than the alternative of not having a democratic voice, of not being able to be able to speak to an elected representative, or not being able to have a—an election.

So the issue of cost, Mr. Speaker, I think, was one of the weaker excuses. They're all weak, but one of the weaker excuses that the members brought

forward for increasing the PST, because we will always have a cost to democracy; there will always be a financial cost to that but it's one that is worth it. It's worth the investment to have a well-functioning democracy.

And so there is a cost of course to a referendum, there is a cost to a general election, there is a cost to a by-election. All of those things have costs but is the cost worth it? And I would argue that Manitobans have said to me, clearly, it's worth it. They believe it's worth it.

You know, I never heard from members opposite in the 12 years that they've been in government and they've known what the balanced budget act, they know what it said, Mr. Speaker.

Over the last 12 years I don't remember once where one of the members opposite, the government, stood up and said, you know, I've got a problem with the referendum in the balanced budget act because a referendum would cost too much. Never was it ever raised as a concern before. Never was it raised as a problem before, that the cost of a referendum could be a detriment, that could be something that you wouldn't want to go forward with.

In fact, quite the opposite, Mr. Speaker, I heard words of praise from members opposite about Manitoba's balanced budget law. In 1999, the year that they won government I remember Gary Doer running on—now Ambassador Gary Doer—running on five different points and one of those points was to keep the things that the Gary Filmon government got right, and that included balanced budget legislation as written at the time. And at that time that included the provision for a referendum; it was right in the law.

And going forward from 1999, up until April 16th, I don't remember one New Democrat ever standing in this House and saying that the cost of a referendum would be a detriment to having a referendum and that it should be withdrawn from the balanced budget legislation.

Only after the government announced that they were going to raise the PST did this new excuse come up. Only after the government announced that they were going to raise the PST did members of the government start talking about the costs of a referendum. Well, clearly, Mr. Speaker, that speaks to the red herring that it was. It speaks to the fact that it really wasn't something that they believed in; it was just another excuse.

They went through the excuse of an imminent flood that never happened. They went through the excuse of blaming the federal government, a federal government that has given them more revenue, Mr. Speaker, than any government in the history of federal governments.

And then they turned to the excuse of the cost of a referendum. Well, that one didn't get very far, Mr. Speaker, so they needed to come up with a new excuse about why Bill 20 was taking away the referendum from the people of Manitoba to vote on the PST increase. So they turned, and they said, well, it takes too much time. We can't have a referendum because it would take too much time. Well, ultimately, when you look at how much time we probably are going to spend in debate on this bill, and I think I saw it quoted to me that it's been 50 days or something that we've had debate in this House and primarily dominated by Bill 20, you could hold the referendum in 50 days. You could craft the question; it's obviously not a difficult question to craft. You could get messages out in terms of the issue and people would have to argue on both sides of the issue of whether a PST increase was valid or not valid. But you could certainly have a referendum within 50 days. We could have already had our decision on the PST increase. We could have already put this issue to bed, so to speak. We could have already determined the view of Manitobans.

Now, I think we've heard clearly the view of Manitobans in other ways, that Manitobans have come forward very clearly and said that this is not something that we think is necessary. A referendum would have settled that, Mr. Speaker. But, obviously, the issue of time isn't one that holds water, that excuse, and it was an excuse brought forward by the government and by the Premier (Mr. Selinger). Premier said it was an emergency, said we needed these funds to flow very quickly to use for projects.

Well, I mean, there's two arguments against that. Well, there's many arguments I suppose, Mr. Speaker, but two that I'll highlight. One is, of course, the Legislature didn't resume until April 16th, so any notion that anything that this government wanted to do this spring session was an emergency is ridiculous. There is no way that a government that only comes back in the middle of April could argue that something is an emergency. Had it been an emergency they would have come back much, much sooner. They would have come back in January or February. The very power that has us sitting here today, the emergency session, the power to call an

emergency session existed for the government in January, in February and at any time outside of the normal sitting hours or the normal schedule, sessional calendar of this Legislature. They could have called us back at any time if they were concerned that something was an emergency, that something had to be done quickly. It only became an emergency for the government after they increased the PST and they realized that Manitobans wouldn't support it. They wouldn't say yes to a referendum on the PST. Suddenly it became an emergency, but it was never an emergency before that.

And I never heard the government, never between 1999 and now, ever indicate that they thought that the referendum provision in the balanced budget legislation was problematic because there wouldn't be enough time. Gary Doer never said that in 1999. He never said it in 2003, never said it in 2007 and the Premier never said—the current Premier never said it in 2011, never argued that there was a fault, a problem with the balanced budget act because a referendum would take too much time. Never heard that argument, just like I never heard the argument from any New Democratic member, present or past, that there'd be a cost-prohibitive factor to having a referendum, and yet they use that excuse.

I've heard members opposite, both on the record and I think just shouting across the House, say, well, you know, we don't need to have a referendum because we got elected. That that was our referendum, that our referendum was the 2007 election. Now, this must be the most desperate excuse of all, Mr. Speaker, because, ultimately, as the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) and the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) say, they didn't run on it. They didn't run on increasing the PST. They didn't run on increasing taxes, and so the government to suggest that a referendum isn't needed because the referendum was the election is the height of hypocrisy. It's hypocritical for a government to suggest that a phony mandate, and that is what they have, a phony mandate is something that they can use to try to do away with a referendum.

So that—and I think when you look at the report that I was referencing about why it is that people have a difficult time admitting mistakes, we clearly see that one of the problems with this government is they make up excuses.

* (15:50)

The other thing in this article, Mr. Speaker, entitled "Gaining respect by admitting mistakes", the author indicates that one of the issues and one of the problems of people admitting mistakes is that a person—before a person can admit a mistake, they must have the self-confidence and integrity to admit that mistake, and I want to read that again. The author of this study on admitting mistakes says, before a person can admit a mistake, they must have the self-confidence and integrity to admit that mistake.

Mr. Mohinder Saran, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And I think, clearly, that is one of the problems that we have here that we're facing, why the government refuses to admit the mistake of Bill 20—because they lack the self-confidence and the integrity. And those are perhaps two different things, but let me deal with the issue of integrity first. We've seen, in many different ways, where this is a government that had lost integrity. We've seen it, obviously, in the decision to increase taxes when they promised that they wouldn't increase taxes, when each of the members went to the door during the 2011 campaign and campaigned on something completely different. That is not a sign of integrity to say one thing and to do something completely different.

We've seen it in the actions of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) when it comes to their dealing with Assiniboia Downs, how they've pitted two fine institutions, the Assiniboia Downs and the Jockey Club and the Red River Exhibition—how they've pitted them against each other as rivals, and now involved in a protracted legal dispute that I'm told involves dozens of lawyers.

An Honourable Member: Could be hundreds.

Mr. Goertzen: Could be hundreds of lawyers, and at what cost, I don't know. Not to disparage anybody in the legal profession; they're doing important work, but I don't know of many litigants who have the—or defendants who have the ability to hire a dozen lawyers. That's a good-sized firm in Manitoba, a dozen lawyers that the Minister of Finance has employed, no doubt at the cost of taxpayers, to defend him in the situation that he got himself into with the Assiniboia jockey club.

But it speaks to integrity, and the report that I am referencing says that the problem that people have or why they don't admit mistakes, is because they lack integrity, and it goes to this point, Mr. Speaker: why

won't the government admit a mistake on Bill 20? And part of it is because the members opposite, they lack integrity; they lack the integrity to admit that they have made a mistake.

And I—and, you know, the Jockey Club is one example; obviously, there are others. But I think that it's important to look at how the government dealt with the Assiniboia Downs.

And, first of all, they went to Assiniboia Downs and tried to bully them—bully them in a meeting. And we've read the affidavits and we've seen the reports of how that meeting transpired with the Minister of Finance saying that he was a politician, he was willing to take on the fight against the Jockey Club, against Assiniboia Downs. And he declared that he would win. He declared victory to Assiniboia Downs and telling them that he would be taking away their funding, Mr. Acting Speaker; telling them that he would be taking away the parimutuel levy and taking away a certain revenue from the VLTs.

Well, that's—it's a terrible way to treat an organization; it's a terrible way to treat a Manitoban. It's not how somebody with integrity would be found to be acting. And yet that is what the record shows—the core records show—the affidavits that we've read.

Now, I know that this'll be tested out in court, and the minister will have his day in court along with his litany of lawyers. They might have to build a bigger courtroom for all the lawyers that the minister is employing, and at some point we'll find out the tab. We're going to find out how much all those lawyers cost, and not cost us, but cost Manitobans. And, of course, ultimately the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) said that they were going to be saving all this money from the Assiniboia Downs and putting it into hospitals. I venture to say that a good portion of—not all that money—is going to be going into lawyers. It's going to be going into lawyer fees, the hourly fees that these lawyers will cost for trying to defend the minister, Mr. Speaker, in court.

But one of the things that Mr. Holberton says that is a problem in admitting mistakes for individuals, is that they lack that integrity. Now, I would speak to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) about this as well, because ultimately I think the Premier—and a lot of the heat falls on the Minister of Finance because that's the nature of his job and his ministerial responsibility, and he takes on that role, but the head of government is the Premier, is the member for St. Boniface. And his inability and unwillingness to

admit a mistake, I think, also goes to the issue of lack of integrity as is cited in this report.

And we've seen a number of different cases where the Premier has not shown a great deal of integrity in dealing with particular issues. I hesitate to go back to Crocus, but it's not an example that should be ignored. We know that, at that time, when the Premier was the minister of Finance, he was given clear warning about the challenges with the Crocus Investment Fund. He was given a clear warning that there might have been over valuation of some of the pieces of that fund, that made up the fund—some of the companies within there. And he did nothing to warn Manitobans.

In fact, he did the opposite. He brought in legislation that would try to make the problem go away. He brought in legislation that would try to make it appear that things were maybe better than they were, by rolling over investments. He went as far as to say to Manitobans that Crocus was strong. The many Manitobans who lost money on the Crocus Investment Fund, he went and told them that Crocus was strong, which not only would have given them the impression that it was a good fund to hold, but it certainly would have given them impression that it was a good fund to buy. So the many people would have actually outlaid money, Mr. Acting Speaker, would have put out money, into the Crocus Investment Fund, and they would have lost that money based on the word of the Premier. And that goes to integrity—it goes to integrity.

And I know that when you look at other things that the government has done, in particular, the Premier, also speaks to a lack of integrity. I hearken back to the whole issue of falsified election returns. And we've had debate in this House about the falsified election returns by many members of the NDP caucus, past and present. And it took an NDP whistleblower to come forward to reveal exactly how the whole scheme on the falsified election returns worked.

But, ultimately, we know, and the history now shows, and this, of course, was a scheme that was led by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), as the disgraced campaign manager from 1999. He led the scheme as the campaign manager, in terms of how these returns were falsified. And we saw that there were claims for labour, for work, that shouldn't have been classified as an expense, that, ultimately, was classified as an expense, and not simply in error, not simply a mistake, because the NDP whistleblower

who came forward told us very clearly that the official agents for the NDP were directed, were told, how to fill out these forms. And, when he raised concerns, that they weren't being filled out correctly, when he raised those concerns, he was told this is how you fill it out; you had to fill it out this way.

And so I give credit to that whistleblower, to that individual who came forward and who told us exactly how that falsified return scheme worked, that it was in place when the member for Kildonan was the campaign manager for the NDP.

And we know ultimately, history shows, that the NDP and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) had to return \$76,000—\$76,000 had to be returned to the people of Manitoba because the NDP members, many of them, falsely claimed it.

We know also, and we learnt this from individuals within side the NDP, that the member for St. Boniface, the Premier, requested a letter from his own party to absolve him of this, to say that he wasn't responsible. He wanted a get-out-of-jail card—free, after the fact.

And we know that there was a very small disclosure of this by Elections Manitoba, and it took a lot of digging to find out exactly what had happened. It took many committee meetings with Elections Manitoba to determine the full breadth of what happened, not easy meetings. And I participated in a number of them with the former chief electoral officer, not an easy time for anybody, I think, at that committee. None of us relish—relished those duties.

* (16:00)

But it was important to find out what happened, and what we ended up finding out was that the Premier didn't act with a great deal of integrity in that situation. And so when we wonder why, when it comes to Bill 20, that the government refuses to admit their mistakes it is important to look at some of the factors about why individuals, Mr. Acting Speaker, don't admit mistakes. So I'll just review that and go on to another point.

So in the article, Gaining respect by admitting mistakes, Phil Holberton says that the first response when confronting a mistake is to deny it or to make up an excuse. He then says that individuals must have the self-confidence and integrity to admit mistakes, and I think, clearly, that is one of the reasons or those are part of the reasons why this

government has a difficult time admitting the mistakes on Bill 20.

I—there's another point in the article where the author says that poor decisions regarding behaviour that comprise our credibility with our employees, constituents or followers are particularly damaging. Intentionally misleading people will not earn respect, but instead will foster disrespect, and, again, that's from Phil Holberton's article, Gaining respect by admitting mistakes. And I want to just read that again so that all members of the House got that: Poor decisions regarding our behaviour that comprise our credibility with our employees, constituents or followers are particularly damaging. Intentionally misleading people will not earn respect, but will foster disrespect.

And that goes to the heart of one of my concerns about what the government is doing by not admitting the mistake on Bill 20. It goes to the heart of my concern about the government not admitting this mistake of raising the PST because, as the article says, intentionally misleading people will not earn respect, and that seems self-evident. But it's even a little bit more than that. In fact, it fosters disrespect, and that is one of the concerns that I have about the Legislature as a whole, about each of us here as MLAs. By the government not admitting the mistake that they have made with increasing the PST and removing the right for a referendum, they are, in fact, fostering disrespect. Now, it's obvious that they foster disrespect on their benches and on their government. I mean, that just comes naturally by the—by their own actions. But I do worry that it's broader than that and that they bring disrespect onto this House as a whole, that they bring disrespect onto the democratic system as a whole, that it fosters cynicism, that it causes people to be less interested or less respectful of the democratic system.

Now, this article talks about intentionally misleading people does not earn respect, and I would argue, and I know there is a parliamentary issue around this, but I would argue that the government as a whole has intentionally misled Manitobans in a variety of different ways and they have certainly misled them in terms of their inability to do anything but raise the PST, because we know there are other things they could do. They don't have to raise the PST. They could look internally first. So they—so the government as a whole has intentionally misled Manitobans there. We know that the excuses that they brought forward, and I listed them already, was an effort to intentionally mislead Manitobans in

terms of why they had to bring in the PST tax increase.

And, ultimately, what results in this—what results in what the government is doing is that you foster disrespect. And I think that the government misses an opportunity. They miss an opportunity to do themselves some good by admitting that they made a mistake, where Manitobans might give them some credit, might say, we understand—we understand that this was a mistake. And there would still be skepticism, I think, and there would be those who have a difficult time trusting the government again. But there would also be some, I think, who would have some degree of understanding, because that is the nature of Manitobans.

I—there's a final quote I want to read from the article, Gaining respect by admitting mistakes. It says that making mistakes is unavoidable. Whether in our personal or professional lives, the manner with which we handle our errors makes all the difference. The good leaders will admit mistakes and move on. The great leader will admit a mistake, learn from it, and never make it again.

I'm going to read that again, Mr. Acting Speaker, so that all the members have heard this. And for their reference, it's in the article, Gaining respect by admitting mistakes, by Phil Holberton. And he says, making mistakes is unavoidable. Whether in our personal or professional lives, the manner with which we handle our errors makes all the difference. The good leaders will admit mistakes and move on. The great leader will admit a mistake, learn from it, and never make it again.

And here—here's the challenge when we come to Bill 20. Not only do we have a government that is unwilling to admit that they have made a mistake—and they are clearly unwilling to admit that mistake—but they're unwilling to learn from it, because one could argue that this is a mistake that they made last year in the last budget. Now, they didn't raise the PST in the last budget, but they essentially did the equivalent with—by raising—putting the PST on a variety of different issues that it didn't apply to before, by increasing fees, by increasing costs of a number of different things. They essentially have now made the same mistake twice, just in a different way.

So not only do we have a government that is unwilling to admit a mistake—and it says in the article, you know, that—I think everybody would agree—that mistakes are, in fact, unavoidable. All of

us in our lives are going to make mistakes, but how you handle those mistakes is the important thing. How you handle those mistakes is what separates you from somebody who is somebody of virtue, with integrity, and how you handle those mistakes is how it separates you from being somebody who's a good leader or great leader, according to the article.

And so the government actually has a unique opportunity. We've presented them with our decision to stand up for Manitobans and to not allow this bill to quick—pass quickly. We've presented them with a unique opportunity; it's an opportunity to not only learn from a mistake, but to be seen, in the eyes of Manitobans, as leaders who understand that there is value in admitting a mistake; who understand that there is something positive that can come from admitting mistakes. So that is the opportunity that we've given this government.

We've tried to do it in a number of different ways. We brought forward a reasoned amendment, hoping that they would look at that as something that they could see value in and move forward, away from this debate, and not have the bill continue to proceed in second reading. We brought forward the hoist motion, which was a different opportunity, but nonetheless an opportunity—an opportunity for the government to essentially hit the pause button and say, we're going to take some additional time; we're going to stop and reconsider.

And all of this was hopefully leading—and it may still, yet, you know, I'm optimistic. I don't like to be a pessimist in my personal or professional life, so I'm optimistic that the government may still listen; that the government may still change their minds and admit the mistake that they've made, admit that they have done Manitobans wrong by not only not following their promise that they made in 2011, but admit that they've made a mistake by not looking for other ways. And how they handle it is how they will be judged. And there is still time—now there's lots of time. We're going to give the government lots of time in this House, whether it's at second reading or there'll be time in committee and there'll be time in third reading, and lots of time for the government to change its mind on this and to admit that they've been—made a mistake.

Now, there is another article I wanted to speak about, and this is about—it's called The power of admitting mistakes, and it's written by Bob Whipple, who is an MPA and a CPLP. He's a consultant, he's a trainer, a speaker and he's an author in the areas of

leadership and trust. Someone that you would want to turn to, I think, so I know there's a number of members who want to know what Mr. Whipple has to say.

* (16:10)

The article is entitled "The power of admitting mistakes", by Bob Whipple. He says, one of the most important—or most powerful opportunities for any leader to build trust is to publicly admit mistakes. The source of that power is that it is so rare for leaders to stand up in front of a group and say something like this: I called you here today to admit that I made a serious blunder. Now, that is something, I think, that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) should—and I hope he has the opportunity to review Hansard and to look at this article. I'm happy, if he asks, to provide him a copy of the article by Mr. Whipple, a consultant and a trained—a trainer and a speaker in leadership. But he says that the most powerful opportunity that a leader has to build trust is to publicly admit a mistake.

So in some ways not only has this fiasco that the government has put themselves in given them an opportunity, I think Mr. Whipple, in his article, would argue that it's given them a remarkable opportunity, Mr. Acting Speaker. It's given them a remarkable opportunity to admit a mistake, and he says that it's a powerful opportunity—a powerful opportunity—to admit that mistake because he believes that it'll build trust. He feels that people who are willing to admit those mistakes, who are willing to stand up and say I made a serious blunder, in his words in the article, gain from that, gain powerfully from that because they gain trust of those who they were speaking to.

Now, he goes on to say in his article that chances are your esteem for the leader would be enhanced simply by the straightforward approach and honesty of the statement. So what he's saying in this article is that individuals who admit mistakes and do so in front of their constituents, that the esteem for the individual who is admitting the mistake is enhanced simply by the straightforward approach and honesty of the statement.

So here again it's as though the government is passing up an opportunity, and I think internally the government looked at this and they realize that they are getting a lot of negative feedback. They realize that, you know, the emails are almost exclusively negative, the phone calls are negative, the call-in shows on the government are negative and the

comments are very strong against the government on the PST increase. And they've sort of hunkered down and I think they are prepared for the long winter, so to speak, put the covers on the windows and then hope that the storm blows over, and then that's their strategy: try to wait Manitobans out.

But they're missing an opportunity according to this author. They're missing an opportunity to enhance—to enhance—the esteem that people would have if they would simply admit their mistakes, admit their mistake on Bill 20.

And so I offer that to the government almost as an olive branch, as something that is helpful. I offer that to them as something that they could look to get themselves out of this situation. And I know that there are members on the opposite side, particularly probably some of the new members who are less jaded than the members who have been there a longer period of time, I think of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) who's a newer member, who sits in this House beside the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar). One has been here a long time and is probably a little bit more jaded than the other, but I know that the newer members of the Legislature, in particular, would be happy to find a way out of this situation for the NDP. How do we get ourselves out of the jackpot that we've put ourselves in? I'm sure many of the new members, and maybe this pertains largely to those who aren't in Cabinet, I think maybe those who are in Cabinet are so consumed by their own spin and their own rhetoric that they can't even see beyond this. But those members, maybe, who don't have—haven't been indoctrinated as much, I think that they would feel if there was an opportunity, an opportunity to get out of this, that they would—they would take that opportunity.

And so I hope that they'll look at these comments that I'm putting on the record, these articles that I've researched for them—and I've spent some time researching and preparing for this speech because I wanted to make sure that I made a point for the members and I gave them opportunities. And in this article it clearly says that the esteem for a leader who admits their mistakes is enhanced by a straightforward approach, and so they have the opportunity.

And I suspect that if the members opposite went into their own caucus and said to the government, to their Premier, to the ministers, that they had made a mistake, that maybe their own members would have greater esteem for them.

An Honourable Member: That would take honesty, though.

Mr. Goertzen: It would take honesty and I'm going to get to that point actually, but I do think that their own members, their own caucus would have greater esteem for the member who raises that issue, Mr. Acting Speaker.

And I know that there are members who are very uncomfortable in the NDP with the PST increase. I know that. And I know that there are many of them who understand that this is very, very damaging to their government. And I know that there are many of them who believe that there are other things that could've been done, other than raising the PST. I know that for a fact, but they don't feel that they have the voice within their own party, within their own caucus. It didn't—wasn't brought up at their own convention, didn't want to have that discussion, didn't want to talk about the harm that the tax increase was going to have on Manitoba families. But there are members I think who would do well by having that discussion within their caucus and by asking their ministers to consider, and their Premier in particular, to consider admitting that mistake.

And I want to go on in this article. This is, I think, particularly instructive for the government because in this article written by Bob Whipple, entitled "The power of admitting mistakes", he lists off a series of things that might stop someone from admitting their mistakes, and there are five different points. I think each of them are—pertain to this particular government, and I'll just—I'll read each of them first and then I'll spend a little bit of time on each of them and how it relates to the NDP government.

So the author says that there are a few situations where an admission of mistake would not produce higher trust. So these are situations where it's counter to the argument he was making before, that generally when a person admits a mistake that they become a more esteemed leader.

That, in fact, the author here is saying that there are some situations where admitting a mistake, in fact, would not result in a higher trust level for that leader. One would be if the blunder was out of sheer stupidity; the second, if this was the third time that the leader had done essentially the same thing; the third, if the leader is prone to making mistakes due to shooting before aiming; the fourth, if the leader simply failed to get information that he should've

had; and the fifth, if the leader was appeasing higher-ups inappropriately.

So let me start off with those—with the first point of the five. So the author, Mr. Bob Whipple, in his article, *The power of admitting mistakes*, says that, unlike his general—his thesis, his general premise, that leaders will most often gain greater esteem by admitting mistakes, there are scenarios where that's not true. And one would be if the blunder was out of sheer stupidity. Now those are pretty harsh words, those are pretty strong words, and I didn't write them. I'm just reflecting them from the article.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Now, I certainly do know that there is a segment of Manitobans who believe that this government has acted in a stupid way, that they have not acted in a way that demonstrates good management or a strong fiscal hand. So this may be one of the reasons why the government isn't admitting their mistake because they recognize, they themselves recognize, that they've acted so far beyond the context of what people would expect of good stewardship and good management that they are not going to admit that mistake because it might fall into the category of sheer stupidity.

The second issue that is raised by Mr. Whipple is that a leader may not benefit by admitting a mistake if it was the second or third time that the leader had done essentially the same thing, and this may be the crux of the matter because when you look at the history of the NDP government, when you look at what the Premier (Mr. Selinger) has done and what this Finance Minister has done and, in fact, what the Finance Minister or what the Premier did when he was Finance Minister, he knew it, and, in fact, see that this is not the first time that the government has made this mistake. And I think it's not outlined particularly or specifically in the article by Mr. Whipple, but I think the point is that people won't respect you admitting a mistake if you make the mistake over and over again because you're not learning from it. It doesn't demonstrate a leader who is actually learning from the mistakes that they're making. And ultimately I think, when you look at how this government has handled the budgets in the past, we see that the same mistakes have been made over and over and over again. And it's ultimately about a government that isn't willing to get its spending under control, that isn't willing to look at priorities, that isn't willing to learn from those mistakes.

* (16:20)

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, I—and I want to welcome you to the Chair—I do think that that probably is the biggest barrier for this government, is that they've made this mistake so often—that they've made the mistake so often in terms of raising taxes, not looking for efficiencies within government that it would be difficult for them to admit the mistake now because people would say, well, you've done this so often. You've made the mistake so many times why should we believe you now?

And, in fact, the premise that Mr. Whipple puts forward, the thesis that you actually gain by admitting mistakes might be lost on this government because they've made the mistakes so often Mr. Speaker, and that is something I think the government needs to consider and they need to look back at their track record. And when you see that the debt has increased in Manitoba, it's doubled. It's doubled in Manitoba, and it's always interesting when you hear members opposite, you know, stand up and talk about how they've balanced the budget so many years, and yet when you look at the debt number, the debt number just keeps going up, up and up. It's doubled since this government has come into government, and there's a disconnect because how can you possibly say—how can you possibly say—that the government is balancing the books, and yet the debt is going up? That mistake is made over and over again.

And we know that, obviously, households couldn't operate this way. There's no household in Manitoba who would suggest that they balanced the budget in their household. And yet at the end of the day they owe more money that year than they did when they started the year off. It defies logic, but it's a way that the government can juggle the books.

But, ultimately, we've seen now that the chickens have come home to roost, so to speak, and the government isn't able to do that anymore. They aren't able to take money from many more Crown corporations. They've mismanaged Manitoba Hydro so badly that it's losing money almost quarterly. I continue to hear the government talk about how Manitoba Hydro is our oil, and yet I don't know many people who lose money on oil, but apparently this government is able to. This is obviously a government who's able to lose money on oil or what is supposed to be the equivalent of oil, and maybe that's because—according to the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) reminds me that during a

previous question period the member who is responsible for the oil industry in Manitoba was talking about how it came out of the mines. So he doesn't quite understand the whole process of the oil industry.

But I think that that is probably one of the barriers, the key barriers in terms of why this government won't admit that they've made a mistake on Bill 20 is because they've made the mistake so often. They know they don't have the credibility. Maybe they would have considered admitting a mistake had it not happened over and over, year after year. But now, of course, if they admit the mistake on Bill 20, then they have to go back and admit the mistake on all the other years that they misled Manitobans, that they've increased taxes or fees, that they've driven up the debt, and that that would take away from any positive gains that they would have, any positive gains that they would have from admitting that mistake. And so it's probably one of the reasons that they won't do it.

But, ultimately, they will have to decide whether or not that is something that they're willing to do, and I hope that it is. I know and I suspect that there are many Manitobans, if the Premier (Mr. Selinger) stood up tomorrow at a news conference and said we made a mistake and we're not going to increase the PST. We're going to look for savings internally. Oh, there'd be great skepticism and well deserved skepticism, I would say, many people who would not trust the proclamation by the Premier. They would look at his past actions and say we don't believe you when you say that, sir, with all due respect. They would say that your past actions don't line up with the words that you're saying today.

And so I understand the difficulty for the government, but I still think it would be the right thing to do. It would still be the right thing and it's not too late for them to stand up and say that we've made this mistake. But I do expect that because—as the point is made here, that they've made the same mistake so often, the benefits of it would be lost on them. But the benefit of 'mani'—for Manitobans wouldn't be lost, because it still is a mistake. So the political advantage might be gone but the advantage for Manitobans would be real. And we'll have an opportunity.

I understand there's going to be a rally tomorrow at the Legislature entitled "The Rally for Respect". It's going to be before noon tomorrow. I haven't checked the weather, but I think it's going to be a

nice day tomorrow. We're going to have a mike—we're going to have a mike set up out front and maybe the government wants to announce there that they're going to reverse the PST increase, that they're not going to do it, or that they're going to call a referendum—[interjection] I'm told from the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) that they'd welcome it—that they'd welcome that announcement—they'd welcome it. And in front of those people, I expect—I—that they'd even get a hand of applause. People would be happy, people might even cheer that the government was making the right decision. They'd still be skeptical, of course, that—you know, that it's a government that's made the mistake so often that, do they really mean it. But if the government was willing to come forward and say, we're going to change our minds; we're going to not increase the PST, we're going—we'll leave it at 7 per cent. I think people would be happy for the decision—it would be the right decision.

There is a third point in the article by Mr. Whipple. He says that one of the situations where an admission of a mistake would not produce higher trust is if the leader is prone to making mistakes due to shooting before aiming. Now, I think this is a colourful way of saying that leaders who don't think through their decisions first often lose credibility and that admitting that mistake after the fact doesn't necessarily gain them much credibility. So, for the Premier (Mr. Selinger), on Bill 20, this is clearly going to be a problem, because I do think that there is a growing feeling among Manitobans that this is a Premier who doesn't think out the consequences before he acts, that he's not truly thinking about how this is going to harm Manitoba families, that he really isn't considering before his actions the negative impact that it's going to have on Manitobans and Manitoba families. And that is obviously a hurdle that he would have to overcome.

In this article, it would indicate that he might not necessarily gain respect by admitting the mistake because he does have a history, Mr. Acting Speaker, of doing things without thinking them through. I talked a little bit earlier about Crocus and how the Premier went out and said—he was the Finance Minister at the time—about how he said the Crocus was strong. Not that he'd just come out and say that off the top of his—off the cuff. It seems that there was some evidence, at least, that he had some understanding there were—the—a lot of understanding—there were problems with Crocus, there were problems with that investment fund. But

that he just simply came out and assured Manitobans that it was strong, that he didn't necessarily think ahead of time of the consequences of that for individuals who might hold onto an investment they otherwise might have sold, for individuals who went and bought an investment that they otherwise might not have bought if not for the comments of the Finance Minister of the day.

We've seen other decisions—the decision by the Premier to continue to look to force Manitoba Hydro to put the Bipole III transmission line down the west side of the province instead of the much shorter, cheaper and environmentally friendly route on the eastern side of the province. This also speaks to a Premier that perhaps is making decisions without much thought; speaks to a Premier who is not thinking through things, thinking through all the consequences, both short term and long term. We know, environmentally, the line loss on the transmission line is going to be enormous over the time—the lifespan of that line, and we know that there are going to be a great deal of money that just simply bleeds off the line; we know that building it on the longer route is likely going to cause more loss of trees; we know it's going to go through agricultural land, and that's going to cost many people in the agricultural sector.

We're disappointed that they haven't worked with the communities on the east side, many of whom, I know a number of years ago, came together and tried to protest or lobby the government to talk to them about putting the line on the east side.

* (16:30)

I remember reading a CBC report several years ago, where I think all of the communities except for one, formed a bit of a coalition, and they wanted to speak to the government about the possibility of having the transmission line on the east side, and the government said, no, we're not going to listen. And it speaks to a Premier who's not necessarily thinking things through before he moves to action.

Now I think in some ways it was probably a hasty decision to move Bonnie Korzeniowski, who was previously the 58th MLA—we're apparently back down to 57 MLAs again here in the Legislature, or unless there's going to be a by-election for the 58th MLA. But I know that putting Ms. Korzeniowski into a position that it was previously held by a backbench MLA may have been a decision that happened quickly without much thought—a

decision that happened quickly without much thought by the Premier (Mr. Selinger).

Now I understand that he doesn't have much confidence in his backbench—I don't have that confidence either—but surely you would think that he would as the leader of that party. I have sympathy for the fact that he doesn't have confidence in his backbench MLAs. I understand that—we don't share that confidence either, but you would think that he might.

And so we'll look to see who he appoints into that position. But, ultimately, appointing Ms. Korzeniowski into that position, when she had decided to retire, speaks of a Premier that isn't thinking things through.

And perhaps that is why he's not going to admit a mistake on Bill 20, because he knows that he won't get the credit that others who admit to mistakes do, because he's proven to be prone to mistakes due to shooting before aiming.

We've seen other mistakes—taking of the vote tax. You know, this was—and we know the government's gone back and forth on this, and now we understand that they are taking \$5,000 per member. But, here again, was a decision of a Premier who wasn't really thinking things through, who decided to take action in a certain way, to try to get money for his own political party, because he didn't want to go out and raise it. But he didn't think through what impact that would have for Manitobans: whether or not it would be—cause cynicism, whether or not it would cause people to be less sympathetic, or proud of the political system. He didn't think it through. And so, there again, we see an example of a leader who is prone to making mistakes due to shooting before aiming. And that is, perhaps, one of the reasons they won't admit the mistakes.

There's a fourth reason that Mr. Whipple identifies in his article, The power of admitting mistakes. And he says that an admission of a mistake may not produce high trust if the leader simply failed to get information that he should have had. And this is certainly a possibility. I don't discount the possibility that the Premier, prior to the budget, didn't have proper information. We know that he didn't bring proper information to Manitobans in the prebudget consultation meetings. And he didn't properly disclose that the government was looking to raise the PST. He didn't properly disclose that information at those prebudget meetings, so that Manitobans could comment on it.

And I wonder if he didn't really examine at all what cost savings could be found in government. Now we've heard the rhetoric and the spin from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) and from others in the NDP caucus about how they've looked for savings in government, but we've seen no examples of it—no real examples of it.

They weren't quick to remove the 58th MLA. They continue to pay a hefty salary and office expenses over a couple of years—not looking for cost savings, obviously, very quickly there.

They not only decided to take the vote tax, but they hired a commissioner to try to justify taking the vote tax. I don't think that justification will ultimately hold up with most Manitobans. Manitobans won't believe that justification, but they tried. They gave it their best.

We know that they haven't been looking for cost savings in the bureaucracy, the administration, the places where front line services aren't provided. When you talk about people that are at the administrative positions within government, there's been no real effort. There's been talk about it but no real progress on that. And so we clearly see a government that is obviously not dealing with all of the information or not providing all of the information. And so, here again, maybe this is the reason why they don't want to admit that they've made a mistake on Bill 20, because they know that Manitobans will look at them and say, well, this is a leader who doesn't act on the fullness of information.

In fact, one of the best ways to get information would be to hold the referendum. You know, there's no better way to find information about what Manitobans think on a particular issue—and particularly on the PST increase—than to hold the referendum. That is how you'd find information most clearly. And so, if they would acknowledge the mistake and hold the referendum, I supposed there'd be some credit. If they refused to do that, they're acting in the absence of information.

But I also think that it's clear that the members of the NDP caucus and Cabinet made a decision a long time ago, that they know that Manitobans would not support a PST increase. They know that the 192 spinners and all the different excuses wouldn't work, that there's no amount of spin or no amount of advertising or government propaganda that even this government, who is well known for government propaganda, could put forward that would convince Manitobans that the government itself couldn't find

savings. I think they made that decision a long time ago. They came to that realization, ultimately, that Manitobans would never vote in favour of the PST increase without a demonstration by the government itself that it was willing to look for savings, and they have not seen that demonstration, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Now, I know there's a fifth reason, and this would go more, I suppose, to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) or maybe the members of the Cabinet and the caucus, where Mr. Whipple indicates that you might not get the desired benefit of trust and integrity by admitting a mistake if the leader who made the mistake was appeasing higher-ups inappropriately.

Now, I don't know. Ultimately, it's difficult to know who made the final decision within the NDP caucus or Cabinet. I think it clearly is a decision that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) made, but, obviously, the Minister of Finance would've had some input into it. And I'm disappointed that there aren't members of that Cabinet who wouldn't have gone to the Premier and stood up and said that this is the wrong decision, who weren't willing, within their Cabinet, to be the voice of their constituents, to be the voice for Manitobans and say this is wrong.

Now, I understand that that's not an easy thing to say. We all understand the political realities and the political environments that happen within caucus, but, on such a significant issue, I think that Manitobans would expect that a minister who was elected as an MLA for a constituency would then, given the added responsibility of being a minister of the Crown, representing Her Majesty, would stand up in Cabinet and say to the Premier or to the Minister of Finance: this is a mistake, this is wrong; that it would be a time to stand up and say: we need to reconsider this. We shouldn't go forward, or if the decision was already made, then we need to admit that this was a mistake.

And there are some members of the NDP Cabinet who have been in the Legislature a long time, who have seen many different political debates, who've been involved in many different political debates, and it would've been up to them, I think, to be the lead voices in this.

But it doesn't absolve the other members of that caucus—members who don't hold a Cabinet position, but who hold a significant position. That is, they were elected by their constituents. And I think those constituents would hold them to a standard—would

hold them to a standard of ensuring that they were doing the right thing for them, for the people who elected them. And if these independent—or these backbench members went out into their community, I think that their constituents would say, we want you to bring back that message and to be a voice against the PST increase, because they're bringing their voice in many different ways. They bring it to the Legislature in rallies, and we'll see one tomorrow.

* (16:40)

They do it on online comment sections; they do it on social media; they ensure that their voice is being heard, call-in radio shows and letters to the editor. They do it in those ways, but, ultimately, they want their elected representative, they want the person that they've sent to this esteemed Chamber, to stand up for them and to say that we don't think this is right, that my constituents don't believe that it's necessary to increase the PST, that my constituents believe there's a different way that we can do things, that we can look for savings internally.

That is what would be expected and I would hope—I would hope that there are some members of the NDP who would take the opportunity that we are giving them. And we are giving them an opportunity; we are giving them a unique opportunity, lots of time, more time than they'll probably ever have on another bill in the history of the Legislature that they're here, to say that this is wrong and that we're going to change direction, that we're going to change their minds.

We're actually doing them a favour. We're giving them a great opportunity, and they'll have time over the days and the weeks ahead to reflect not just on my words or the words of the members for caucus, of our caucus who have spoken on this legislation but to reflect on the comments of Manitobans. That's the most important thing.

You know, this is—what we're doing here in the Legislature provides an opportunity, but it's not an opportunity to listen to us. It's an opportunity to listen to Manitobans, to go and listen to your constituents, to go and talk to the people at the farmers' market, to go and talk to the people at the coffee shop, to head out to some of those fairs that I talked about when my comments started earlier today. That's the opportunity, the opportunity to engage with Manitobans, and because the government is refusing to take the opportunity of a referendum, then that is their opportunity. And they'll

have to take a different opportunity, and maybe there'll be a 'freve'—a few brave MLAs in the NDP who are willing to stand up and say: this isn't right for my constituents; this isn't right for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I know some of them feel it. I know some of them feel that way. Well, I know for a fact that some of them feel that way, but it's not enough to feel that way and it's not enough to say it privately. You got to stand up for your own constituents; you got to say it publicly.

You know, you took a public stand, and when you ran for election, you may have run on a promise that your government didn't keep, but you still have an opportunity to do the right thing. The bill hasn't passed into law.

An Honourable Member: What does the PST apply to?

Mr. Goertzen: The bill hasn't passed into law—I hear members of my caucus begging to know what the PST applies to. And I only regret that I'm barely through my introductory comments and—but there'll be lots of time.

There'll be lots of time in the days ahead to go through in more detail what the—

An Honourable Member: Oh, come on. Give us a couple.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, okay, I'll—just as a sampling because it seems to be by popular demand. I'm just going to pick a random page.

So it turns out that the PST will apply to cleaning supplies and disinfectants, contact lens fluid—oh, this one's interesting—defibrillator, fetal heart monitor and other similar equipment used by health-care givers for care—to care for patients, drainage systems used in surgery, exercise equipment—and, of course, that has great meaning within our caucus—eye wash fountains, first aid kits, first aid training, dolls and body parts, gauze, hot water bottles and heating pads, humidifiers. It will apply to needles and syringes and needle disposal boxes and pyjamas and patient shirts.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many different examples, and I don't want to spend great time going through each one right now. I do intend to spend time going through each one and their impact later on, but I want to continue on a little bit about the issue of admitting mistakes.

I want to refer to an article by E.C. LaMeaux, who wrote an article entitled becoming better by admitting mistakes—"Becoming better at admitting mistakes"—sorry, Mr. Speaker—"Becoming better at admitting mistakes". And the subtitle is, "4 steps to apologize and move forward".

And this is—I want to give this as a closing remark on the problem that this government is having admitting the mistakes that they have on Bill 20. And this is instructional. This is actually intended to provide some good advice to the government about how they can move forward in admitting their mistakes, and then I'm going to go on and talk a little bit about the history of referenda, and, if I don't have time today, I'll have time at a future sitting.

But the article says that everyone has messed up at some point in their lives, and I think that all of us in this House would admit that that's true. Now, the government has really messed up in terms of bringing forward the PST increase. It's a significant mistake that they've made. It's a significant problem that they have foisted on Manitobans. But there are some specific steps in this article by E.C. LaMeaux that give different ways of—that a person who makes mistakes can actually move forward.

Now, the first step in admitting a mistake is admit the mistake to yourself. Admit the mistake to yourself. It says, if you can't admit to yourself that you've made a mistake, there is no way you can admit it to someone else. The longer you wait to acknowledge it, the more likely you are to think that no one else has noticed either.

Now, that is clearly, I think, one of the issues, Mr. Speaker, that the government is having in not admitting the mistake on Bill 20. They haven't been able to admit the mistake to themselves. Now, I mentioned earlier that there are some members of that caucus who know that this is a problem. There are some members of this caucus who are feeling it very strongly, maybe not some of the new members, like the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) who 'prounces' around St. Norbert, telling everybody how they should be happy; they should be proud and privileged to pay more in taxes. He might not quite get it yet. He might not quite understand. But I know that there are some members who have a bit more of a balanced and reasonable outlook who know that this is a mistake, who know that this is a problem.

But the ability to admit mistakes starts with the ability to admit the mistake to yourself, and that, I

think, is a problem that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) are having. They haven't been able to come to the realization themselves that they have made a mistake. They haven't internalized it. They, themselves, haven't been able to say, yes, we have made a mistake. And perhaps some of the members of the NDP caucus can help the Premier and the Finance Minister—and at getting them to admit to themselves that they made a mistake by bringing in the PST increase, getting them to admit to themselves that this wasn't good for Manitoba families. And there's a caution in here, Mr. Speaker. There's a caution because it says that the longer you wait to acknowledge the mistake, the less likely you are to do it.

And so every day that goes by where the government isn't admitting their mistake, it makes it less likely that they are going to admit that mistake, and that's problematic. It's problematic for Manitobans, but it's why we're giving them that time. It's why we're doing what we're doing. It's why we're standing up for Manitoba families and giving them the opportunity to admit that they have made that mistake. But they first have to admit it to themselves. They first have to admit it to themselves. And I take hope—I take hope—in the fact that I know that there are some NDP members who know that this is a mistake, who know that what the government is doing is wrong. Ultimately, they're going to have to come forward and say it publicly if they intend to be able to justify it to their own constituents and be able to look their own constituents eye to eye. They're going to have to admit it themselves.

But I take hope in the fact that there are some of those members opposite—there are some of those members opposite—who actually know this, but they've got to get some others in their caucus and their Cabinet to admit that mistake to themselves.

Now, the other step that they say in admitting mistakes and becoming better at admitting mistakes in this article, it's step No. 2. It says that you need to admit your fault to the person or the people it affected. It said, this is probably the hardest step because it requires you to be humble and vulnerable. Try not to play the blame game. Passing blame on to circumstances or other people will just frustrate the people affected by your error.

* (16:50)

Now, this is a particularly important point, Mr. Speaker, so I want to focus on it just a little bit more.

The article says that the way you admit mistakes is: No. 1, admit the mistake to yourself, and then No. 2, admit your fault to the person or the people affected. And it says, under that heading, that this is probably the hardest step, because it requires you to be humble and vulnerable. Try not to play the blame game. Passing blame on to circumstances or other people would just frustrate the people affected by your error.

And this is, I think, going to be one of the most difficult things for this government to overcome in admitting the mistake. It'll be, I think, the hardest thing, when it comes to this government, determining whether or not they are going to admit that they have made a mistake by wanting to raise the PST, because they will have to admit that fault to Manitobans, and, as it says in the article, that will require them to be humble.

And this is a government that is not humble, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that is arrogant. They are the opposite of humble. We see their arrogance in so many different things. We've seen it in this House. We've seen the arrogance of this government in so many different decisions, in how they try to defend taking \$5,000 from Manitobans, and how they try through the vote tax, and how they try to defend the Bipole III transmission line decision, and how they try to defend this PST tax increase, and how they try to defend other things. They have a very difficult time being humble. They believe that they have a divine right to govern, and that is problematic. They believe that they are entitled to government, that they are entitled to the office of government.

So how are they going to admit that they've made a mistake on Bill 20 if they're not able to overcome that clear obstacle of becoming humble and acting with humility. They've been in government for so long that they feel that it is something that they are entitled to, that they earn something that they—just naturally inherit. They've lost touch. They've lost touch with Manitobans. They've lost touch with the single mother who is struggling to make ends meet, who might, for the reasons that have noble responsibility of their own, are having a difficult time, Mr. Speaker, giving the things that they want to to their children, putting them into the programs that they might want to. They've lost touch with the people who are at the food bank, and we've heard from David Northcott, for example, at Winnipeg Harvest, who talked about how difficult this is, how hard this is for people who are poor and impoverished, how hard this PST tax

increase will be. They've lost touch with those people.

We heard from Harry Wolbert, who is an activist for those with disabilities, who said that this PST tax increase will hurt those who are living with a disability, Mr. Speaker. Well, they've lost touch with those individuals. They don't have the humility to come forward and say that this is a mistake. They've lost touch, if they've ever had touch, with those in the business community who are—and I don't just mean the big businesses, and I've heard the government, the former Finance Minister and members of this government talk about sort of their IKEA economy and trumpet the coming of IKEA. Well, and that's great, but what about those smaller businesses that are really the backbone of our economy, that really are employing the vast majority of people in Manitoba who don't have the same kind of economic backing that some of those very large multinational and international corporations have. What about those smaller businesses who are employing 10, 20, 30 people, who are running it themselves? We know many new Canadians start up these businesses and they run it themselves. I know some of my friends opposite will tell me about the new Canadians who are coming to their communities, as they're coming to mine as well, and they start up businesses that they might have had a familiarity with in the country that they called home before they came to Canada, or they bring something unique in terms of their culture and start up a business in their community.

Well, that's not easy for them; it's not easy for them to put in the economic capital, first of all, to start that business up, but now to see the PST tax increase—or the PST tax go from 7 to 8 per cent, it's even harder. It's harder on those individuals. That's who they've lost touch with.

So it's not a humble government. We don't see the humility in the statements of their members—and we listen and we ensure that those statements get out to Manitobans—whether it's the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) who trumpets—who trumpets—the PST tax increase as a great thing for Manitoba and for Manitobans. He's lost touch, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't understand the reality that Manitoba families face.

We've heard it sometimes from the member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff), for those individuals who were affected by the flood, who said that it could have been worse, it could have been worse. We said that they would take away flood programs

from them if they didn't stop a protest. That's losing touch, losing touch with those individuals.

So, when I read this study and it says that one of the key factors to admitting a mistake—and admitting a mistake on Bill 20—is that you have to first admit the fault to the person that you've committed the mistake on; and that you have to be humble, that you have to be humble, but that humility doesn't exist in members opposite; that they feel that government is something, that it is something that they deserve, Mr. Speaker, not that it's to be earned; that they feel that it's something that should just come to them; that they shouldn't have to work for it. Well, that's not the Manitoba way. It's not how Manitobans are.

And I would ask some of the members opposite to look into their own communities, to look into their own constituencies, Mr. Speaker, to look at those people who are struggling and because people are struggling in many different areas. And I know what that's like. I know from my own family experience that it's not an easy thing.

So I ask them to go to those individuals and to talk to them with an open mind and an open heart about what this PST tax increase will do, because they'll never admit their mistake on Bill 20 until they approach it humbly and with humility. And it's not a government that demonstrates humility within this House, Mr. Speaker. It's not a government that seems willing to act without arrogance, to act in a humble way.

And I think that they might regain some of that humility if they got out of the Legislature, went to some of these communities, and talked to people who are impacted. Go spend some time with the people who are impacted by the 2011 flood who have not gotten the compensation that was promised by this government, by the Premier (Mr. Selinger) who promised them that compensation prior to the 2011. If you're going to admit your mistake on Bill 20, if you're going to admit your mistake, you've got to go and gain some of that humility.

So go and talk to those people who are impacted, who lost their livelihoods or their homes or their vacation properties that they had built up over a number of different years. And go and ask them how life is for them since the flood of 2011. Go and ask them how difficult it is to not have the compensation that was promised to them—that was promised to them, Mr. Speaker. A promise was made to them by the government.

And I think in doing that the government might gain some humility. I think the government might find some humility and they might be willing to admit their mistake on Bill 20.

And that's what this exercise is about, about trying to get the government, to shake them into acknowledging that they've made a mistake by increasing the PST, by taking away that referendum, that these are mistakes.

But, as I've tried to outline in my comments in the last hour, Mr. Speaker, that the only way that you're going to find an ability to admit the mistakes on this bill is to do it with humility.

When I have an opportunity to speak to this bill again in the days ahead I'm going to spend some time talking about the history of balanced budget law in Manitoba. I want to spend some time talking about the history of referendums in Manitoba and in

Canada—the very referendums that this government is taking away.

But I hope that the government will reflect on the comments that I've made today about how you can only make mistake—or you can only admit mistakes when you approach it with humility. And they'll have some time to reflect on that, Mr. Speaker.

So that is what I hope to leave with—

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

When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) will have unlimited time remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

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