

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 23, 2013

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I seek leave of the House to move directly to Bill 207, The Family Maintenance Amendment and Garnishment Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to proceed directly to Bill 207? *[Agreed]*

DEBATE ON SECOND
READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Speaker: So we'll now call Bill 207, The Family Maintenance Amendment and Garnishment Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Education, who has two minutes remaining.

**Bill 207—The Family Maintenance Amendment
and Garnishment Amendment Act**

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): We believe that the changes to The Family Maintenance Act that are suggested by the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen), of course, are certainly worthy of further consideration, and I know that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) would be happy to further discuss Bill 207 with the member for Midland.

The bill does propose some significant changes to the way the Maintenance Enforcement Program would work, and we think that the full and proper consideration of these changes—it would be good to have a discussion with the Minister of Justice about the legislation.

And, furthermore, you know, I would just like to also comment on Bill 214. I know that the Minister of Justice would be just as delighted to have a meeting with the MLA for Steinbach about Bill 214 and I know he sent the MLA for Steinbach an email about that meeting and I'm sure that—*[interjection]* Oh, it's a letter, not an email. You know, let's focus on the—let's be part of the nitpickers convention. I know the MLA for Steinbach likes to be part of that convention. So, anytime he wants to have a dialogue about Bill 214, we certainly believe that that is something that is important.

We saw that the federal government—the federal Minister of Justice tabled the cyberbullying report. He asked it—asked after Rehtaeh—the tragedy of Rehtaeh Parsons, of her death, he asked the Justice ministers across jurisdictions to come forward with that report. That report was tabled and was released on Friday afternoon. It's an important report in regards to keeping young people safe.

And, of course, anything we can do to keep young people safe is important, and we would love to have a dialogue with the MLA for Steinbach. We're not sure what he's afraid of, but let's get him to—

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

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): And it's a pleasure to rise and put a few words on record in support of Bill 207, introduced by my colleague from Midland, the family maintenance amendment and garnishment amendment act.

I think every one of us as MLAs has run into some fairly complicated divorce proceedings, some of them very negative, certainly where the individuals involved are more in line of a vendetta than trying to find a equitable solution to their emotional situation and work their way through the process.

Family law system tends to be very complex because of the great emotional and financial tolls that are taken on the families involved, and Bill 207 would be a good step in helping to lessen the unnecessary emotional hardship and ensure that the

financial obligations are met and that the finances are distributed justly between the different parties.

The Maintenance Enforcement Program, which is a very useful program, currently facilitates child and spousal support payments and is fairly effective—not always perfect, but fairly effective—in keeping these in place. They keep a good record of payments and they do take some of the legal actions, and that makes it more a third-party approach to dealing with the obligations and takes some of the stress off the individuals involved in terms of taking—helping to collect money so that there isn't the constant harangue from one member to the other or one individual to the other that keeps the level of negative feelings high between the two individuals involved in many cases. And it also reduces to some degree the financial uncertainty—there's some indication that the money is coming—and actually is prepared to take action outside of the province, though sometimes that doesn't work out all—a hundred per cent either when individuals end up in different provinces. And it also is a process to help garnishee any unpaid monies, and that, too, removes the individuals and gives them a little distance between one another so that the wounds can heal and yet still meet the obligations to the family, which are very important.

But there is a gap in the system, and that is involved with the legal costs. In many cases, a judge may order that one party or—is to pay for the other legal costs. Often that is associated with who has the best financial resources, who has been the breadwinner in the family, whoever that might be. And the enforcement of collection of legal costs is left, really, to the individual, and that actually brings back the issues that we talked about having solved with Maintenance Enforcement Program. It makes it very difficult, very adversarial and sometimes practically impossible if one person refuses to pay the other. And it frequently is used as a tool to penalize or to take out vindictive tendencies from one to the other.

And certainly adding the legal costs as part of the Maintenance Enforcement Program would help solve many of these problems, and in particular some of the emotional turmoil and the ability to collect monies from—one from the other would be put aside in place of trying to have the courts or have Maintenance Enforcement Program, through the courts—under direction of the court, rather, actually take the steps that is necessary to collect this money

and get us away from the adversarial situation that seems to rise up very often in these cases.

I think every one of us has seen at least a number of cases where this has been happening and where they actually bang away at each other to the point that not only did they destroy the family in terms of emotions but financially they destroy each other almost to the point of no return, and it just seems unnecessary and certainly not advisable.

It reduced somewhat the financial uncertainty because the legal costs can be quite significant in some cases and certainly would be best dealt with as quickly as possible.

It's a complicated court process to take legal action like the garnishing—garnisheement of unpaid monies. Bill 207 moves judge-ordered legal costs in the Maintenance Enforcement Program, and that means that costs will be collected basically in the same way as maintenance costs are already collected, so that would prevent any redundancy in the system and have some degree of efficiency, which we're always looking for.

* (10:10)

The bill increases consistency in the program; stability will be provided for many Manitoba families. This bill takes one step towards a kinder legal system than we have right now.

Now, there are some practical implications in that the costs will be—only be included after six months, when the money was unpaid. That means the parties have a chance to reach an agreement, should they be able to do that, and actually figure out a way on their own to do this before Maintenance Enforcement Program would have to take steps in terms of actions to do that.

A couple of provinces actually already do this. They have similar provisions allowing—that would be Alberta and Ontario—allowing a legal cost to be included in their equivalent of the Maintenance Enforcement Program.

They said earlier we all have many individual cases where we see this sort of stuff, where individuals involved in a divorce process, whether it be over financial issues or whether it be over the children, often spend a great deal of time and resources—many of which they can't really afford in the process—and emotional input to work at one another through the court system. And, in particular, if there's an inequity in who has the resources to go

to court, we see repeated attempts to go to court, really just to punish the other individual. And the cost, of course, can actually force one individual or the other to—really, to bankruptcy; to insolvency. And, of course, that's to no one's benefit, because then collecting maintenance enforcement is much more difficult if there has been a bankruptcy or, certainly, a lack of resources available to deal with that.

And you see one thing sort of leading to the other. And yet even though it makes very little sense to take any further action in this regard, that is usually resolved in some form by the court, whether it's justice—you know, whether it's equitably or not, it has been resolved. And yet they continue to go at one another for fair lengths of time, and it just doesn't seem to make any sense.

We had an individual that was actually 18 years in the process, and still fighting over it, and really only ended when the children aged out and became adults. And it just seemed they were fighting just to fight. And the cost to them had been terrible in terms of legal fees and, certainly, in emotional cost. I'm sure that any hope of—for the family in terms of rebuild—certainly the cost had been huge to the children. They had been pitting—one parent had been pitted against the other and the children had been pawns in the whole process. Not the sort of thing that any family ever wants to see, and certainly damaging beyond any repair and probably damaging to the children, as well. You've got to wonder how they're ever going to have a normal married life in the future when they see this kind of process going on.

So I certainly appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record regarding this. And I would encourage the government to consider Bill 207, enter into some discussions if it needs to be incorporated in something else. But, by itself, it seems to be a very well-thought-out bill and something that is already in place in a number of other provinces and something that we could—should certainly support and I would certainly encourage the government to support. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): I'm pleased to stand today to put a few words on the record with respect to this private member's bill, and appreciate the member from Midland bringing this forward.

And, as mentioned by my colleagues, that certainly our Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) is very—

would be very happy to further discuss Bill 207 with the member from Midland.

And I guess one of the things that really comes to mind for me is some of the different family dynamics that I've witnessed having spent several years in the public education system as a teacher. And certainly can appreciate the difficulties that the children experience as a result of a marital breakup and whatnot, and the impact that that would have on their day-to-day lives. When they had a—you were concerned about how they're performing in school and whether or not they're able to get their test—the test results that they wanted or hand in the assignments, but they often had other issues that were of concern to them that you couldn't really appreciate unless you've been through that or know very personally people who have been through situations of marital breakup for a variety of different reasons. And certainly I did see the impact daily in my classroom of students who were struggling with these issues, and that's why we, as legislators, have to find the best possible way to provide supports for families, in every sense of the word, to ensure that young persons are the least adversely impacted in situations such as these.

The Maintenance Enforcement Program is to enforce the child's rights for financial support. And that's a very important program that, in addition to child support, enforces spousal support obligations, extraordinary expenses as ordered by the court. And each year the Maintenance Enforcement Program directly disburses over \$50 million to Manitoba families, and that's very important—a very important piece of legislation which we have made improvements to in recent years. In 2012, we made changes to the program that would allow for more timely transfer of funds to those who are receiving supports, as well as a simpler method of paying for those who pay the support. It allows us to better track those who fail to pay their child and spousal support orders and allows us to go after them and garnish their wages. The changes to the program have allowed Maintenance Enforcement to spend less time processing routine payments and more time going after those who are not living up to their responsibilities.

But the Maintenance Enforcement Program is one of many different initiatives that we've undertaken. In 2004, we passed legislation that enabled the Maintenance Enforcement Program to deal with extraprovincial garnishing orders. It clarified that if a debtor faulted on a payment plan

ordered by a deputy registrar, judge or master, the full amount of arrears became due and payable; 2007, technical amendments to improve enforcement orders of interprovincial cases; 2010, passed changes to enable implementation of a new computer system and introduced compensatory payments, late payment penalties, et cetera. So many, many improvements have been made to the Maintenance Enforcement Program.

But there are a number of other initiatives that we've undertaken as a government to provide supports for families who were involved in divorce proceedings, and those initiatives aren't just on maintenance enforcement, but they also deal with emotional difficulties of divorce proceedings, mediation services, programs to assist children and assistance settling issues around child support fees.

The First Choice program, for example—this allows for dispute resolution to help parents resolve custody and access disputes, and it's available through the court referral and offers early intervention to help a couple in divorce settlement and out-settle their outstanding issues. And during divorce proceedings, if parents can't agree on arrangements for the children and mediation has failed, either parent can ask the court to make the decision for them when a decision is made based on the best interests of the child. So I think these are very important programs and initiatives that are filling some of the gaps to help address some of the emotional issues that individuals might struggle with on a daily basis when they find themselves in this situation. It talks about the child's physical, emotional, intellectual and moral well-being.

Another program, For the Sake of the Children, helps parents with children to understand their situation and how it will impact them and their children, at no cost, and it's mandatory for those dealing with child custody and access.

But, you know, there have been a number of other initiatives that we've undertaken to support families in Manitoba, and one of the ones that I'm very proud of, of course, was improvements that we made to family law that will extend benefits to families—extend the benefits of family law—pardon me—to same-sex couples.

We passed the common-law property and related amendments act in 2002 as well. It extended property rights and obligations of couples to their common-law partners, meaning that in the case of a

breakdown in the relationship or the death of one of the partners, there's a share of the property.

In 2002, Mr. Speaker, 56 Manitoba statutes to legally recognize the obligation and rights for parents in same-sex common-law relationships by allowing joint adoptions—I think a very important day for our government to have introduced these initiatives.

In 2001, protection of pension and death benefits to same-sex couples in common-law relationships. We think that's—really speaks volumes to how far we've come, but the fact that we've—we still have a long way to go, I think in many ways, in recognition of same-sex couples and partnerships.

And I know in my family, it was a very happy day when a cousin of mine and her partner of over 30 years were legally entitled to be married and extended the benefits that all couples in Manitoba enjoy under Manitoba law.

*(10:20)

But there are other areas where we've done a significant amount of work, Mr. Speaker, to support families in crisis. And essentially there are a number of variables that contribute to that crisis that finds families in divorce court, and whether that be financial disputes and, unfortunately, situations of domestic violence are also one of the root causes of separation and divorce. And if you look at some of the things that we've been doing to support couples in that crisis, we've made significant progress in addressing domestic violence. In a recent family violence in Canada report Manitoba's attributed as a pro-charging and pro-prosecution jurisdiction that causes increases in arrest rates, and our five-year domestic violence strategy is focused on three priorities: supports for victims and families being priority No. 1; interventions for people with abusive behaviour; and prevention, awareness and training.

And, of course, we've put a lot of resources into supporting this particular initiative as well, Mr. Speaker, whether that is capital improvements to shelters, whether it's working Aboriginal communities on specific strategies to address domestic violence, whether it's providing stable funding for A Woman's Place to employ a lawyer to assist women affected by domestic violence, working with provincially funded organizations to ensure recruitment and retention of qualified staff, providing interpreters to assist those applying for protection orders, and the list goes on and on and on.

There are a number of other initiatives that we've introduced to support families in crisis, but that strategy comes after years of investing in prevention of domestic violence and victim support. Increasing the number of residential bed nights, for example, for shelters in women's resource centres to over 42,000 nights total, up 11 per cent from 2011–or 2010-2011; making domestic violence victim services available in all 69 court locations, up from five communities in 1999. So we're providing the resources closer to home as well for women who might not have been able to access those by virtue of geography and distance, having better access to these programs to support women who find themselves in crisis.

So, Mr. Speaker, we know that there are a number of improvements that have been made, and we're certainly open to continue to have that discussion and talk about other ways that we can improve laws and regulations to support families in crisis, and we really appreciate the opportunity to have put a few words on the table today.

And I also would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that in that spirit of co-operation—and again I'd like to echo the comments of my colleague, the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) with respect to the need to have more discussion around Bill 214 and Bill 18 so we can move those initiatives forward to provide safe, nurturing environments for our children in the schools. And this is a piece of legislation that is talking about support for children.

There's a lot of legislation we have in front of the House that talks about how we can support our children in a number of different ways, and I would hope that the members opposite would sit down and have those conversations and we could move those bills forward to find a way to create safe, caring, nurturing environments for our children in our schools. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): It gives me pleasure today to stand up to speak to this well-crafted private member's bill from my colleague from Midland, and it's the family maintenance amendment and 'garansheement' amendment act.

And basically what it does, is it—it does a little bit of housekeeping to the Maintenance Enforcement Program and gives a judge the opportunity to make a decision that he could enforce or suggest that someone would have to pay the legal costs of the appellant or the appeal costs.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's a—I would suggest that any time that there's a divorce and there's children involved, the big losers, of course, are the children, and we often see that this happens. And as a former hockey coach and baseball coach, you really did notice a difference when you were coaching in rural Manitoba, and many of the children would come and you knew their last name. But then you met their parents and they had a different name if you happen to meet the mother or the father, but it was a different name.

And you had some difficulty sometimes when you've got 15 players on a baseball team and eight or nine of them are from split homes. And it presents quite a challenge when you're coaching these children. You understand then, once you find out that they are from a split home, you understand why their attitudes are the way they are, and in many cases they are much different than those that come from a single—or from a family that hasn't been split apart. And, of course, then you can adjust how you deal with these.

But at the same time many of these will only have a single parent, and if there is only a single parent, then the money is not always easy to come by. And, yes, we do have the Maintenance Enforcement Program that requires that—they keep a record of payments made and then take legal action if such garnishments of payments are not made, but we know in reality and many times the payment will be missed for a month, two months, three months, and then all of a sudden there's a payment comes through, but in the meantime that single parent, whether that be male or female, has to deal with looking after these children, has to make the payments that they have to make, whether that's their rent or their telephone or their hydro or their groceries, clothes, school supplies. And it limits the amount of discretionary money that they would have to attend any of these, whether you're in a hockey program, whether you're in a baseball program or football or rugby or whatever that you're participating in, even dance classes. It all takes money, and if it's not coming through then it certainly puts a big stress on it.

And it hurts the children more and more each time that—it's hard for them to get past that, because they also think about it. We think that, you know, it'd be great to 10—be 10 years old with no worries in the world. You don't have to worry, breakfast will be on the table in the morning and supper will be there at night and you'll be told what to do and when to do it.

But it's not that simple when you're in a single family.

And so if you go through the divorce and it's been bitter or sweet, doesn't matter, it's a split, but at the same time one person is going—wants to appeal this and you go through the appeal process, that just adds extra costs that they don't have. And let's suggest that then they get a lawyer appointed by the court for the individual that has the two children or three children or five or one, but the other person is away working and has no responsibility and they go just to be mean, to get even. They feel that there's—that they have lost something that they shouldn't have or they've been treated badly, but at any rate, Mr. Speaker, they do it for frivolous reasons, just to get even, in spite. They in—what they do is they incur costs for the other parent that has not got a lot of money. They can also withhold the maintenance payments just to make it that much tougher and make them go through the garnishment, or they'll go to another province. It's hard to track some of these down, and I know from just being as an MLA the cases that we've had, finding people in Winnipeg, finding that other spouse in Winnipeg wasn't easy. How do you go about finding him in an oil patch or they actually leave the country? How do you chase these people down? It takes time and it takes money.

And that's where the social assistance, the support programs kick in, but we also know that your social programs don't cover the cost of rent many times, and that's why there's so much demand on the food banks that we have now in the city or in the country. There's food banks in most of our communities throughout Manitoba. I can tell you now that in Altona the food bank there has seen double the use that it saw four years ago, five years ago. Is that all single parents? I'd say it's not, but at the same time single parents will make up a huge contingency of those that are using that food bank.

And so we know that our social system does need to be looked at, but at the same time this bill here would give the judge the opportunity to add that extra cost, if it was a frivolous case and he felt that way, it would be his judgment call whether he would award the costs of the legal case to the individual he thought that had brought this frivolous case forward and a spiteful case. And then it would fall under the maintenance enhancement program for the collection of it. That would give the other parent that opportunity, then, to move forward, the parent with the children to move forward at least with some idea that they would have that income at some time.

* (10:30)

And, yes, I see that we've—we say that we could wait six months to see that if they work it all out, and that's a reasonable amount of time for most of us. Six months isn't a lot of time. But at the same time, if you have two children and you're on a very, very fixed income, that six months could be an eternity. That could mean that your children aren't going to be able to go play baseball, that they are not going to go into dance lessons or music lessons or into a hockey program. That six months could take that part out of that child's year and out of their growth, which puts them behind when they go forward, as well, in life—that their friends have moved up; their friends have got better in whatever they're doing. And so I would actually like to see that shortened not to six months, but to three months. That's plenty of time.

But in—at the—regardless, I believe that the judge needs that opportunity, or needs the—to have the power to award those costs to the person that brings a case forward. And in other cases—and it's a—in other cases when you do go to court over some other issues, and the judge can rule in your favour for costs if you happen to be the successful individual in court, the judge can rule in your favour and the person that you're in court with ends up paying those costs.

So it isn't something that's new in the court system. It's just something that would be basically a housekeeping situation for the Maintenance Enforcement Program, and it's certainly something that I would encourage all the members in this House, on the other side as well as on our side, that we all support this bill because it's well thought out, well crafted and well researched by the member from Midland. Thank you very much.

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs): I'm pleased to put a few words on this bill two thousand and seven, the family maintenance amendment and 'garnishen' act—amendment act, sorry. I think that this is an interesting bill. It provides for an award of costs to a person entitled to maintenance payments, spouser or child support if the costs remain pay—unpaid for more than six months. It also is a related amendment to The Garnishment Act, allows for the garnishment of those costs as if they were part of the maintenance order.

I think that it's an interesting act. I'm pleased that the member has moved it forward, and I think it is worthy of further consideration among other bills

and other laws that we currently have. I think the bill proposes some significant changes to the way the Maintenance Enforcement Program would work and full and proper consideration of these changes would be necessary before the changes like these would be enacted.

I note that the member from Emerson who spoke before me actually said that maybe it should be changed from six months to three months. Maybe there should be other changes, and those are the types of things that we actually have to look at to see. Because for once, in a very, very long time, I might even partially agree with the member from Emerson, which says, maybe you don't wait six months, you wait three months, and that's the type of thing that we need to talk about.

I also like to point out to the member for Emerson, he mentioned how he was very, very concerned about kids being able to play for soccer or baseball or different sports. I would just like to point out that we do have programs through Sport Manitoba and KidSport—that, actually, the Conservatives vote against every single time—which allow the kids opportunity to pay less for sports and participate in sports. And I'm pleased to be one of the ministers that brought that KidSport program in, who helped fund it, and I'm pleased to be in a government that supports it. And I'd like to take note to the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) that that program supports kids around the province who are able to play sports and that the Conservatives vote against it time after time after time.

I'd also like to say that I'd like to mention that we have had some other legislative changes that have been very positive in Maintenance Enforcement, and I don't think that we ever want to stop looking at the program and moving it forward. I think that—and I'll go through a little bit of a history where, in 2012, we made changes to the Maintenance Enforcement Program that allows for a more timely transfer of funds to those receiving support, as well of a simpler method of paying for those who pay support, as faster transfer. We allow changes to allow us to better track those who fail to pay for the child and spousal support orders and allow us to go after them and garnishee their wages.

And we've also allowed a better ability to 'trake'—take enforcement action against companies, really reach out across provinces to make sure that we can get the money that is owed to those families. And the changes to the program have allowed Maintenance

Enforcement to spend less time processing routine payments and more time going after those who don't live up to their responsibilities.

In the 'sor'—in the case of support fees, Mr. Speaker, if there's a conflict between the parents and The Maintenance Enforcement Act, there are court-ordered alternatives. One of the considerations I believe, though, is that you shouldn't always have to go through a cumbersome support, and I know that to the members opposite, that their solution to Bill 214 is to go and get a court order—go get a court order. Now, I know that I've had the opportunity to be up north throughout the province and I know that sometimes it's rather cumbersome; not all towns and communities have lawyers, not all have regular circuits.

And so, therefore, in some areas of the province it's harder to get court orders. It's harder to meet the financial burden to go to a lawyer to go get the court order in Bill 214. And so—often, when you look at just court orders, when you look at the judicial process, some people are very intimidated by it. Some people have restrictions as to money. I know that the members opposite, who spend \$1,600 on PST or a \$160,000 of 'expensitures', might not have that concept of not being able to financially make it, and so, therefore, the courts and lawyers can sometimes be cumbersome. What you want to do is have a swift process, and so I urge the members opposite to look at other options which might be, you know, faster, simpler, less legalistic. And that's just a point.

I do have to commend the members that there's actually talking—and the member from Emerson actually talked about the modern-day family. I am pleased to see that the Conservatives have moved beyond the 1950s and maybe into the 1980s or '90s to realize that the family units are now modern, they're different.

I was personally very supportive of our government when we actually recognized same-sex couples and new families, the real reality of family. I was pleased when we actually supported all families in Manitoba to make sure that all families were treated equally, whether they were same-sex couples, et cetera, and we passed that. And I note for the House that every single Conservative voted against making sure that everyone, my family, had the same rights as the other families.

And I find it interesting because now you notice that most people are supportive, Mr. Speaker. And

'most' people are supportive because they've realized that families are single-family families, same-sex families, heterosexual families. And, regardless of the family, we want to always be supportive, and we want to be supportive of children and make sure that they get the basic supports that they need, which is food and housing and love and, again, the opportunity to play sports and be part of our community. So I think what we need to do is continue to look at how we support all families. And I agree; we need to make sure that every single person is supported.

So I look at the members opposite and I say you've had eight months to discuss Bill 218. We want to make sure that people are supported in their communities, in their schools, and I hope that the members opposite rather than continuing to stall that, rather than continuing to be obstructionist, look at how we can move forward to support all families. *[interjection]* And, you know, the member from Steinbach is screaming from his seat—as normal—where he is saying that he wants to have the floor to talk and talk and talk to delay that passage of that bill.

And, you know, I understand that the member from Steinbach is firmly planted in the 1950s where he doesn't to extend rights to same-sex couples. He does not want to extend rights to single families. He doesn't want to extend rights to new immigrants. He wants to make sure that he is firmly planted in the 1950s, firmly implanted where he feels comfortable. I personally believe that all people should have rights; all people should have the right and support.

* (10:40)

So in 2004 we passed legislation that enabled the Maintenance employ–Enforcement Program to deal with extraprovincial garnishee orders, which means that a person couldn't just leave Manitoba and become—not payment. We also made sure that we could reach out to different data bases, to taxes, to lottery winnings, to all sorts of garnishee owners because what happens is that we want to make sure that if a person has an obligation to support their family, they meet that obligation.

And we also passed changes to implementation of the new computer system introduced through compensatory payments, late payment penalties, all these different charges.

Now, I have to commend our Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) because I think this is important; I think

it's important to make sure that we move forward to have good strong laws.

And, you know what? I actually believe the member from Midland has something that is worth consideration; it's worth consideration because it takes the steps that we've made in the past and moves them forward. And I don't think that we have a simple answer to this. I think what we have to do is continue to move it forward together. I would like to see that we look at a bigger spectrum, not just this one issue, but bigger issues. So I invite the members to actually pass Bill 18 to protect children regardless of their issue in the community.

I look forward to this—at 207—to say, hey, it's a nice step in the right direction, among many steps, and I look forward to members of the opposition to try to move from the 1950s to maybe the 1970s or '80s to realize there's lots of families out there and we need to support all of them every way to make sure that they thrive.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): On—it's a pleasure to put some words on the record with regard to bill 07—Bill 207, The Family Maintenance Amendment and Garnishment Amendment Act, and I believe that what the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) has put forward is a very credible and worthwhile piece of legislation that should be supported by this government.

It's, you know, they're out of ideas Mr. Speaker, and I think that this government needs to have some support from the private members who really do have some significant ideas that aren't going to cost Manitobans a 7 per cent increase in PST. That seems to be the only thing that they're interested in debating in this House. This is a very significant piece of legislation.

We all have families in our constituencies who are struggling, Mr. Speaker, a lot of families who are going through serious financial situations. I represent an area that had been struck by the BSC in 2003 and we had to find ways to support those families, and a lot of them went through some very serious emotional and financial stress. So as a community we pulled together to provide opportunities to provide skates, provide books, provide rides to events to ensure that all families were given equal opportunity to deal with extracurricular activities.

We support strong Manitoba families, and I believe that this legislation speaks to an area that this

government has failed to address. This is providing extra emotional hardship and financial hardships on families, Mr. Speaker. It should be something this government should be looking at, not increasing the PST to, you know, line their pockets to make announcements especially when families like these are struggling.

We have seen the Provincial Council of Women and LEAF provide strong interest in legislations that are similar to this and to providing, ensuring that families who have issues who need to have the ear of law enforcement and legal support, that they are being supported, Mr. Speaker, that they can go forward without worrying about the extra burden, the extra costs associated with doing that.

We know that there are over 10,000 children in care under this government's watch. It's the busiest welfare system in the country. So we know that there are challenges facing all families in Manitoba—all families—whether they are connected to the child welfare system or not. We know that families throughout the province at times will face a very significant challenge that may see them separate or may see them come together in a variety of different ways that create challenges within their family and their community. So we need to provide those supports.

And I don't believe that what has been presented by this government—especially the minister or the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) who's talking about the 1950s, everybody has progressed beyond the 1950s. Mr. Speaker, that's rhetoric. Everybody here understands the significance of a family and how we need to strengthen all families in Manitoba. It's beyond what the—what this member has been saying, and I don't think he put on—put words on the record that are relevant to what this bill is speaking to.

This bill speaks to providing people supports so that when they have to go to court, when they have to go to court to get resolution, Mr. Speaker, that there isn't that extra worry, that extra burden of fear that, how am I going to be able to afford this? We are struggling as it is to provide supports for my children or myself, and I need to ensure that I'm getting support from this individual who was a part of my life or the children's life and is, actually, you know, paying towards that.

Financial uncertainty of not knowing where money comes from, Mr. Speaker, creates a huge, huge emotional stress factor within a family. Many

families break up because of financial obligations that can't be met. We know that. We—we've—there's statistics to prove that, and what does that do to the family unit? What does that do to the children that are involved in that family when they see their parents in conflict, when they see their mother, their father or partners in conflict? It takes a lot of strength and energy as a child to then go out into the community, go into school and not be worried about how their parents are doing. And I think that whenever we can provide a resource that actually assists parents who are having to go to court, then that's a good thing.

And I know that the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) talked about all of us dealing with constituents who have had issues with maintenance enforcement. We all know that there has been challenges within the department where people haven't been receiving calls back and there's been situations where, you know, people have received—in my constituency 'expecially'—where there have been garnished wages when it's been a mutual agreement that they don't need any more maintenance.

You know, this—there's a family in my community that has—that have both come forward and signed papers and saying, I don't want any more money from my spouse. We've agreed. He's 18, he's on his own, and you know, the garnishees continued. So we know that there are challenges in the maintenance system that have to be looked at, but I believe that this provides something that is critical in ensuring that families remain healthy and strong, and that the resources are not the key issue in the struggles that they're facing, that they can continue to function and that they can provide for their children.

And you know, we talk about KidSport and other things—yes, that's great, but you know what? Communities as a whole provide those supports for families. It's not about this government providing KidSport and all kids can access that. Some families are too proud to go to KidSport. They don't want the government or the community to know that they're struggling, but their neighbours know. So it's not always about how this government can, you know, provide that support or is, you know, patting themselves on the back. It's not about that. It's about communities and families who are working together to make sure that their communities are strong. And, you know, I think, what I'm hearing in my community is that they're tired of this government telling them what they can do and when they can do

it, and then taxing them on the backs of their decisions.

* (10:50)

You know, I have families that are saying, you know, legal costs have been included in the PST. They expanded legal costs or lawyer fees in the PST. Well, you know, here, again, Mr. Speaker, is another example. If they hadn't expanded the PST to legal costs, you know, this might have been a little bit easier to swallow for some families. But there's that extra tax that is put on decisions like this that have made families very concerned about where their next meal may come from, have put an extra burden on our food banks. You know, in Brandon the biggest users of the food banks in that community are the working poor, and that is a huge hit—this 1 per cent—on those families. They're—you know, they're—they've seen reductions in hours to work so they take on another job. It puts stresses on the family and it could lead to family breakdown. And if you don't have solid mediation supports, then you have to leak—seek legal support, and I believe that this bill speaks to a tool that can help provide a hand up for families who are having to use that. Not—there is not—I don't think a family that I know of that wants to go through the legal system. They would—you know, they would be honoured to be able to say the mediation worked or, you know, we've reconciled and things are fine and we're going to, you know, continue on with our family. But there are times when you need to have legal support in the best interests of your children or your spouse or your family. You just can't say that this is not going to happen.

And I believe that this Maintenance Enforcement Program amendment is an excellent tool in providing the supports that families need, Mr. Speaker. It provides consistency in the system and stability for Manitoba families. That's exactly what we as legislators are here to do, is to provide tools to ensure that Manitoba families 'refie'—receive stability and solid legislation that is not going to put more on the backs of those families. It provides a step forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): I'm pleased to stand and speak to this private member's bill that makes amendments that are definitely worthy of consideration, and I thank the member opposite for bringing them forward. I'd like to say that on this side of the House, we're open to consider and discuss and make improvements when it is in the best

interest of the public, as is the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan).

And I think that, as everyone has already recognized, separation and divorce is a clearly a painful, difficult experience for not just the couple but if children are involved and, I would say as well, the extended family, especially if the couple is not splitting amicably. Sadly, especially when children are involved, there are people who can manipulate situations in order to hurt a partner and children get caught in the middle. It's very sad that there are individuals who are blinded by anger and pain that would make a partner suffer further or cause an impact on their children in an effort to inflict that kind of pain or discomfort on their partner. And how sad that the need to cause that pain is greater than the importance of making sure their children are properly supported and provided for.

I had a conversation recently about a couple who had split, and this was a while ago, obviously, because I was being told about the snitch line from the previous government. But in this situation it had been used as a tool to hurt one of the partners; the angry partner phoned the snitch line to complain that the partner was doing something that they hadn't done. It was a false accusation and it created a great deal of hardship for this—the other partner.

I think that the important thing here is that when we make legislation, it needs to be legislation that is in the best interests of people and that can't be manipulated. As we all know, relationships often are complicated, but one would hope that when children are involved it's fairly black and white, that's what's best for them should be what guides the behaviour of the couples in the split. That isn't reality for many people, unfortunately, and I'm a little surprised that members opposite haven't accused us of being responsible for people who shirk their duties and fail to pay child or spousal support, because we often get accused for the—for being responsible for folks who don't do what they should be doing.

But what we can do is implement the kind of legislation that we have created that recognizes specific challenges for cases where people are willfully choosing not to make maintenance supports. And things such as the changes we made to the Maintenance Enforcement Program in 2012 that allow more timely transfer of funds for those receiving support as well as simpler methods of paying for those who pay, these changes also allow us to better track those who fail to pay their child and

spousal support orders and allows us to go after them and garnish their wages. The changes to the program have also allowed Maintenance Enforcement to spend less time processing routine payments and more time going after those people who aren't doing what they should be doing and supporting their spouse or their children.

And even before that, in 2001 we reorganized and created a specialized compliance unit to target wilful debtors. And this includes another initiative that allows the authority to seize lottery winnings in excess of a thousand dollars and apply the seized winnings to outstanding support that is in arrears.

Well, as I've said, relationships are often complicated, and we all know that separation and divorce is difficult. I think our government recognizes there are specific challenges outside the nuts and bolts of divorce and we've created programs to help families through this major life change by 'prevading' programs that assist families through the emotional and financial difficulties of divorce proceedings. We offer things like mediation services, programs to assist children and assistance settling issues around child support fees.

One of the things that I'd like to speak for a moment on in separation and divorce issues is when a domestic violence has been involved. I mean, this is terrible in any relationship between adults, but when violence is involved when children are a part of that family structure it's—even if they're not experiencing it, they're witnessing it—and it creates more victims and more issues that will have a long-lasting effect.

When I was quite a young woman, I was still living at home with my mom and dad and didn't have a car, but was working—[interjection] And I was at work one day and my shift ended, and my mother had come to pick me up. And as I was—well, she was coming to pick me up—as I waited at the front door watching for my parent's vehicle, I saw a woman. She was probably in her 40s and she was—it was a cold winter day, I should add. She was walking, pacing up and down the sidewalk on one of the side streets. And I saw a gentleman who had left another business coming to his car, and she was nearby, and he, like, practically shooed her away. And she was shivering; she was very cold. And I happened to be the only person that she could see apart from this fellow. And she approached the business where I worked and I opened the door to see if I could help her, because we were closed, I was the only one

there. And she asked if she could just wait with me inside the enclosure because she was so cold. So I invited her in. Shortly after my mom came and I had to explain that I was going to be leaving. And I sensed there was something very wrong, and I asked her if she needed a ride somewhere, and she said yes, that she could use a ride. So my mom and I invited her into the car and she was shivering and shaking in the backseat, trying to make a little bit of small talk with us. We asked her where we could take her, and she said she lived up on the other side of town on top of the hill. And as we drove up the hill, you know, she chatted with us a little bit, and was clearly having some issues, but not sharing them with us. We were a little uncomfortable of strangers, wondering how many questions we should really be asking her. We got to her house and sat in the lane for a few minutes. It was fairly awkward and she started to talk about the fact that—in a very mumbling tone—that, you know, she had done this before and was going back again and that her partner told her, you know, you'll always come back, I know you'll always come back. And it was pretty—sorry—it was pretty painful, because there wasn't a lot we could do at that point and it was clear she going back to an abusive relationship.

So I'm extremely happy that on—that would encourage me—

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers) will have two minutes remaining.

The hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private members' resolutions, and the resolution we have before us today is sponsored by the honourable member for the Interlake, and the title of the resolution is "Investment in Flood Protection Initiatives".

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 26—Investment in Flood Protection Initiatives

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau),

WHEREAS the severity and rapidity of flooding and extreme weather events are increasing in Manitoba and across Canada; and

WHEREAS Manitoba is recognized across the country as a leader in flood management, with a

history of investing in flood protection that began with the construction of the Red River Floodway following the 1950 flood; and

WHEREAS the \$1-billion investment made following the 1997 flood of the century in upgrades to the floodway and in building ring dikes around rural communities has prevented up to \$35 billion in flood damages; and

WHEREAS in response to recommendations by the Lake Manitoba Lake St. Martin Regulation Review Committee, work is beginning to make the Lake St. Martin emergency channel permanent and to construct an additional outlet on Lake Manitoba, flood control infrastructure projects that will protect people and property around Lake St. Martin and Lake Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Leader of the Official Opposition has proposed a 1 per cent cut to all departmental budgets which would prevent these crucial projects from being funded; and

WHEREAS it is critical that the provincial government continues to build on its record of investing in critical flood infrastructure to protect Manitoba families, as investing in flood protection now will prevent much greater costs to families, communities and businesses in the future.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to support the provincial government's building and renewal plan to invest in critical flood protection; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to continue to be a national leader in flood management; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba thank the dedicated emergency personnel and volunteers that work to protect Manitoba communities from flooding.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for the Interlake, seconded by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau),

WHEREAS—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Mr. Nevakshonoff: It is an honour to rise today to speak to this resolution, which I think all would agree—well, certainly on our side of the House all would agree that it's very timely, given that we're in the midst of this Conservative filibuster to block the raising of the PST from 7 to 8 per cent, which is money that—*[interjection]* Well, and my first round of applause from members opposite on this very important resolution.

It amazes me that they seem to feel this flood is over, that it's business as usual, that everything's back to normal and that we can continue to budget like nothing happened where—when, in reality, we went through what can arguably be titled the flood of the millennium, as compared to the flood of the century back in 1997. This was without a doubt the greatest natural disaster that our province has ever experienced. Over—well over a billion dollars in damages incurred, most of which the provincial government had to bear, I might add, because of, you know, a lacklustre performance by the federal government in terms of being innovative with program funding.

And I look back to the flood of the century in 1997, which paled in comparison to this flood given that, you know, farmers were able to actually seed a crop in the Red River Valley that year gives you an idea how quickly that flood rose and dissipated, whereas this flood we are still experiencing the impact of two years and running later.

But the Chrétien government back in those days recognized that it was a major disaster, put additional dollars on the table through the JERI program. The current federal government sees no need to go beyond the box of standard disaster financial assistance, so I think that's the first point that's relevant here, that the majority of the cost of this flood has to be borne by Manitobans, which is extremely unfair.

One point I would like to make about the flood of 1997 that we should all be aware of was, well, obviously, the Conservative government was the government of the day back then, and it's interesting to know who was the Minister responsible for Emergency Measures back in 1997 at the beginning of the flood of the century here in Manitoba—none other than the current Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) today, and what did he do? How did he respond to that crisis? How did he respond to that crisis? He put his own personal ambitions first and actually resigned his seat at the

beginning of the flood of the century to run for federal office. How ironic—how ironic; that's how dedicated he was back then, and, quite frankly, that's about the same level of dedication that he has today in regard to repairing the damages, because without the increase in the PST, we cannot do all that we have to do to flood proof the rest of Manitoba.

Winnipeg is pretty well protected now thanks to Premier Roblin and also Premier Doer, who increased the capacity of the floodway. It's now up to a one-in-700-year flood protection level. And the Portage Diversion, which diverts water out of the Assiniboine River into Lake Manitoba—Winnipeg is relatively flood proofed now, and a lot of Winnipeggers, I don't think, hardly were aware that there was a flood going on. Certainly the reactions that I witnessed during the standing committee hearings on Bill 20, all of the people that the Conservatives mustered to come forward to speak, it was like nothing had happened. They had—they weren't even aware that there was a flood. Comments like, oh, that was two years ago; and, Manitoba always has floods, there was nothing unusual about this flood. Well, I beg to differ, Mr. Speaker. This was a catastrophic event.

And unlike members opposite, who have no commitment to infrastructure improvements whatsoever—and, again, their time in office certainly proves that—we are committed to flood proofing all of Manitoba, not just—people around Lake Manitoba, the people around Lake St. Martin, bore the brunt of this flood above and beyond any other region in our province, and they knew why they had to do that. They accepted the fact that for the greater good the water would have to come that way, which was huge of them to have that degree of understanding. But the quid pro quo to that, Mr. Speaker, was that we cover their costs off, which we did to the best of our ability, and also committed to addressing these issues going forward, which we certainly did with the construction of the emergency outlet, was a fundamental step in the right direction to lessen the impact.

And now, of course, our commitment to further flood control infrastructure, the—some type of a drainage ditch out of Lake Manitoba into Lake St. Martin so that water can move more freely—*[interjection]* And members opposite are laughing. Obviously, they don't believe that. They think that they can just let this slide, but it's been funny to them, I guess. Certainly their performance is amusing. And I can think of a couple of examples,

like, you know, the impact on First Nations communities, I think, is the biggest impact of this flood. There are still 2,000 people who are evacuated from their homes is certainly not a laughing matter by any means.

* (11:10)

You know, and that's one the first things that we have to do, is we basically have to rebuild entire communities. This is going to cost several hundred million dollars or more of which Manitoba is going to cost-share 50-50, hopefully, if Ottawa comes across. That remains to be seen yet. Certainly, they never came across for the ranchers around Lake Manitoba, Lake St. Martin. I know that—talk about baffle gap and double speak.

You know, the member—the Finance Minister and myself were in Meadow Lea hall when there was roughly 300 ranchers had come to hear what we were going to do and, you know, we had been waiting for a period of six or seven months. I know the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) and I had toured in the late summer of 2012 into the Interlake up around Vogar and north of Ashern, around Moosehorn there, and shortly after that the minister applied for an AgriRecovery program to cost-share on feed and freight assistance, thinking, my goodness, why wouldn't the federal government participate in something like that? They do get a lot of support from the ranching community, and yet, nothing. We heard nothing until the spring of the following year when we went to this meeting at Meadow Lea, and I tell you the nonsense that came out the mouths of the members of Parliament there. Bob Sopuck talking about disaster financial assistance, if only the government had applied for it under DFA—utter nonsense, Mr. Speaker, as we all know and as ranchers around the lake know. And, you know, the vehicle for assistance was AgriRecovery. We all understand that, and yet, double-talk from them, and to this day it remains double-talk. So their level of commitment is pathetic. They have left not only First Nations people, but ranchers, but cottagers; all of these people combined have been cast adrift by the federal government.

So I see my time is almost up. I'm just getting started here, but I know that other members are going to add to my words so I would just like to close by acknowledging all the people that worked so hard to fight this flood, and I would begin with people at the municipal level. They were on the front line of the flood and a lot of them worked very hard

for a period of months for very little financial recompense. So my hat is off to them and to the leadership on the First Nations communities, obviously, but also to our staff, people who worked, again, tirelessly across months with no weekends. All of them did their duty above and beyond what would normally be expected of them.

So together as Manitobans we survived this flood, and we will continue to move forward to do what's necessary to prevent another one happening in the future.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I do want to speak to the resolution that was brought forward by the member from Interlake and, of course, you know, there's always two sides to a conversation and we know very well that the member from Interlake doesn't have a good relationship in negotiating. What we've seen very clearly from the 'memmer' from Interlake is that he clearly is not going to stand up for his residents, his constituents that elected him to be there.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I know that the part of the resolution that we do agree with is the last part, the Legislative Assembly dedicated emergency personnel, volunteers to protect communities from flooding.

In fact, we have a very good RM, the RM of Caldwell who did an outstanding job. I'm surprised the member didn't give him credit for a job well done. We certainly know that Reeve Sigurdson has made significant efforts to protect Sugar Point. We know that, also, those other mayors and reeves across the province of Manitoba surrounded by Lake Manitoba did an outstanding job as well.

And, of course, the staff. The staff that did a outstanding job. And, of course, many of them never had experiences fighting floods, but we certainly salute those unsung heroes and certainly offer our thanks for what they did do to protect a number of homes and cottages and businesses that may have been lost through no fault of their own. Now, when it comes to the resolution, let's talk about what the member has said there. In regards to the dike, the government always wants to stand up and say that they built the floodway around the city of Winnipeg—farthest thing from the truth.

What they did do—what they did do—Duff Roblin built the ditch—what they did do was bring it up to standards in the last election. Gary Doer did that; we certainly give him credit. But also line their pockets;

they forced union dues to be charged on that. In fact, it's very clear what they could have done—there's a number of projects—and the minister from MPI certainly knows these ones—there's bridges that never got built, there's other projects that never got built. Yes, they say it was on budget, but you know what? What they don't say is what was cut—what was cut from the dike, from the floodway, that actually was imperative in protection. A number of those projects didn't go forward, and they very well know them. We know them as well.

In fact, there's a lawsuit against the Province now in regards to those forced unionization dues. We could have done a lot more with an extra \$100 million in union dues that was brought forward by this government. We don't see the logic from what this government truly wants to do, where their priorities are. In fact, they—the member from Interlake wanted to talk about the feds in regards to the meeting in Meadow Lea hall. I was at that meeting—very clearly, you know, whenever you want to sit down and negotiate with somebody, you poke them in the eye. That's real smart—real smart logic. What we need to do is sit down—in fact, if there's an issue, what I would do if I was in government—and they always say, well what would you do? Well, first thing I would do is sit down, negotiate, find out what the issues are, what we need to resolve them. The government is the one that went out and made the commitments without any consultation with the federal government. Whenever they make a comment, live up to those comments.

In fact, it was the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), the agricultural minister at the time, said there was multi-year funding—multi-year funding. We have yet to see the impact of what this government really wanted to do with multi-year funding. They say, oh, it's the feds' fault—it's the feds' fault. Feds weren't the ones that made the comments. They were not the ones that made the promises. Truly, truly, the minister from MPI will be able to get up and make his comments. I certainly hope that he corrects the record, saying that it wasn't them that made that comment.

In fact, they made it not once, not twice, but three times. They have yet to deliver on that promise. Now, we look at flood protection. They want to talk about flood protection. In 2005, they got a cheque for millions of dollars from the federal government for what? Flood mitigation. Whereabouts? Shellmouth Dam. What did they do? They spent the money. They spent the money; they didn't do anything else.

They could have had flood protection in place to store some of that water. What a novel idea. Hold back some water—time release. What did we see from the government? Again, lack of leadership. They talk about the great job they're doing.

Now, they also talk—and the Minister of MIT certainly goes on the record time and time again—we dropped the lake 5 feet. He didn't drop the lake 5 feet; he don't know the numbers. He dropped it 3 feet, that's what he did. It was not because of the outlet. Now, if he truly, truly wanted to do something good for the people around Lake Manitoba, was build the outlet from Lake Manitoba. They didn't do it. If they truly want to do something of significant difference, they would build the outlet now, not in 2021. They're bringing in \$300 million a year in increased taxes through the PST, which they've made very clear they're going to pass, which we know it will—37 to 18, it's going to pass, it's just a matter of time. But what they haven't done is made a clear indication of where that money is going to go.

There's \$20 million in roads, the rest of it's a slush fund. We surely know that what this government is doing, is going to go out and buy some more votes, they're going to make some more fancy announcements, whatever they can do to keep in power. That's all it boils down to. *[interjection]* Yes, the members say, well, where's the feds? That's a good question. Where would they be if they had the courage—if they had the courage to sit down and say, you know what? Plane tickets goes on sale all the time. They have a thing called email, they have a thing called letters. Why would you not sit down with your partners and say, what can we do to help expedite this?

In fact, the government—federal government made it very clear there's 50-50 dollars for flood mitigation. And what they need to do is say where their priorities are. We have yet to hear the priorities from this government. They're good at the talk but they don't actually come through with what they're going to do with a pacific project. We'd be glad to hear what those are. Let's talk about pacifics.

* (11:20)

Also we want to talk very clearly about the fact that the outlet—that they claimed to be the saviour, but yet they haven't talked about how quickly they're going to get it done; 2021 is not acceptable, not at eight thirteen eight—eight thirteen eight is where the level is right now. They continue dumping water. *[interjection]* I'll give the member from Thompson—

he has his chatter going on—I'll give him the opportunity to get up in a minute and he can clarify the record because he's great at the natter. I know he got called last week because he just can't wait to get his words on the record, but you'll have that opportunity.

I can certainly say for sure that by nineteen—2021 we may have another disaster if the lake level keeps where it's at. We have no shoreline, no shoreline on Lake Manitoba to protect those homes or the communities. They're in doubt. They're in doubt of whether or not they're going to be able to withstand another storm, another windstorm. We need to get the lake level down in a timely manner. And you know what? They talk about all the protection they put in place and it's great, but really the Z-dike was built by the federal government. The floodway was built by the Conservative government. We built the Z-dike, and I tell you what, Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the fact that we are in a position to make sure this government is going to be held to account and we're going to do it each and every day. And if they think they can bulldoze the PST through just on a resolution and a whim by this government that say they're going to do this and do that, people don't believe it for one minute.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): I—it's going to be a pleasure to put some words on the record after that little rant.

You know, Mr. Speaker, to have an argument with the opposition is a pointless task. It's a lot like playing chess with a pigeon. No matter how many plays we make or the evidence that we present, the Conservatives just knock over all the pieces and flap around like they won. It's just unbelievable.

I mean, the floodway is seven times larger than it was, but that doesn't count because Duff Roblin originally built it. You know what? Duff Roblin would be proud of us for what we've done doubling that floodway. We're not denying that Duff Roblin built the floodway. He was a visionary. Unlike the Conservatives of today, he was a visionary. I have great respect for the man. He's the reason why my house wasn't under water this year, because he started that floodway, and the other reason is that we made it seven times bigger.

In 1997, when that flood came through, everybody in St. Norbert had all of their furnaces and hot water tanks cut out, brought up to the upper

level. People had to take semi loads of all their clothing and furniture and memories and pictures out of St. Norbert because they evacuated it in 1997. And you know what happened after the flood when everybody got back and luckily it was within inches and everybody luckily didn't get flooded? They had to put all the furnaces back and everybody had to move back in. All those families were displaced. And you know what happened? You know what the government of the day did, led by the Leader of the Opposition? Now—actually, no, sorry, he abandoned it halfway through the flood. He decided to pull the pin because it was too stressful and go run for something in Ottawa because he had his personal desire. But you know what the government of the day did back then in '97? Nothing. They didn't add any flood protection. They didn't go and say, you know what? That was really close. Wow, maybe we should double the floodway. No, no vision from them.

In 1999, when we got elected, our government took the initiative to flood proof the whole Red River Valley. And you know what, the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon)? You're welcome, because we double—we made your floodway—*[interjection]* Thank you. We've made sure that the dikes around his community protect his community to one-in-700-year floods, just like Winnipeg is protected now. They have no vision. You know, the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) was talking about how, you know, we've brought the floodway up to standards. What standards? The standards of Alberta, one-in-25-years? No, one-in-700-years. We're—we are flood leaders. The whole country looks at us.

In fact, there's an article in here from The Globe and Mail talking about what happened in Toronto, and they're talking about the rolling blackouts that they had because of the power stations that went under water and that the plants that were—and, in fact, actually this actually leads into a hydro argument, because it talks about the gas-fired plants that were backup stations that were supposed to be brought in with the last election. But the Liberal government there decided not to do it, so now they have green blackouts because the government there spent hundreds of millions on useless but trendy solar and wind power instead of shoring up the weak links in the existing system.

But you know what we're doing here, Mr. Speaker? We're building another bipole and we're

going to be building a safe hydro system for the whole province so it doesn't go down. But, you know, under their leadership, no vision. I mean, do you know what would happen if we have another emergency? I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition would just turn the lights off and head back to Ottawa and maybe run for leadership of the federal party. It's absolutely ridiculous.

You know, you look at what happened in Alberta and then you think about what happened here, and you got the opposition saying that they would cut \$550 million from the budget. Well, how is that going to do anything to flood protect the Assiniboine valley? So, no, it's okay because they don't live in Winnipeg; we'd just let Brandon flood. We're not going to do that, Mr. Speaker. We're going to flood protect Brandon. We're going to flood protect all of those areas.

You know, the members opposite go and talk about this flood channel that we built, and they say, oh, you know, you built this channel? It'll only drop the lake by 3 feet. We did something that was unheard of. It was unbelievable. It was built in a matter of months. It would normally take years, and now we're trying to get the federal approval from their federal cousins to allow it become a permanent structure in our floodfighting arsenal. But, no, no. They—you know, they don't want to complain about it. They would probably just fill it all in. They'd probably go there with shovels themselves and fill it all in. I know the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) certainly would, because he stands in the Portage Diversion when we're trying to operate it during a flood. Unbelievable. They want to talk about flood protection. Let's stand in the middle of the Portage Diversion when we're having a flood.

You know, there's just so much that you can talk about about the hypocrisy on their side. I mean, you know, we hear the Leader of the Opposition stand up and talk about transfer payments from the federal government, when the truth is that the actual transfer payments are down with—you factor in inflation, 11 per cent, minus-11 per cent. But you know what? They're not good at math, so they don't like to do the inflation thing. They just say, well, we're getting a little bit more than we used to.

We also didn't use to have 125,000 more people—citizens that in Manitoba—we consider them part of Manitoba. They don't take them into account because they're newcomers. They don't think that they exist. But even though we provide them with services and

we have to provide them the flood protection and we have to provide them with health care, no, they don't exist, Mr. Speaker, underneath their vision. You know, in our vision, everybody exists in Manitoba. We love having people come here. And you talk about these—the transfer payments. I mean, it's so erroneous that they talk about this stuff and they say that, oh, well, we're getting record transfer payments. They're down. I—you know, I don't understand how they can't do math, but maybe they went to school during Conservative times when the schools were getting cuts to their funding. I'm not sure.

You know, the Leader of the Opposition talks about a big game, but his \$550-million cuts would never see any more flood mitigation built. In the time they were in power they raised the gas tax and slashed funding to roads. Is that how we're going to build things? Is that what we're going to do? We're going to raise things and then slash funding? I don't think that's the way you can build things.

I know one thing that can probably prevent some flooding. Maybe if the Leader of the Opposition, who lives in the—and the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), when he lives in his area—maybe if he makes sure he turns his 12 sprinklers off on his mansion's lawn all the time that would maybe make sure that River Heights doesn't flood. Maybe he can help out that way. He can help make sure that River Heights doesn't flood by turning off his 12 sprinklers.

You know, they're really—the hypocrisy here is just unbelievable. You know, they talk about flood protection and then they want to cut money from the budget. They would've laid off the very flood workers that we depended on in 2011 to make sure that we beat that flood. You know, we had a record flood, like the member for the Interlake was talking about. There was a record flood that was bigger than the scope in '97 and we've spent—we spent over a billion dollars in provincial money on that flood, provincial money because the federal government's cost share was \$400 million. And I don't know what we're at today, but we still haven't seen the full amount. So over a billion dollars from our government towards that flood, that's our commitment.

And then, the other thing that we've done is spent almost a billion dollars on doubling the floodway. We spent a—almost a billion dollars on flood protecting the Red River Valley. So now we're looking at that—and then, you know what? We got a report saying now the Assiniboine valley needs

another billion. So we're well over \$3 billion. Well, you're going to make that happen when you cut \$550 million from the budget? They're obviously doing math in some other realm and in some other universe.

Mr. Speaker, I mean, they complain—they think—they pretend to be the titans of industry, but they don't even have a clue on what's going on. I mean, we have a 5 per cent unemployment rate, second lowest in the country, and all they do is complain. That's all they do is complain. We have people working in Manitoba, and they complain. We flood protected the whole Red River Valley, and all they do is complain. It's not—it's—oh, well, you know, it's—that's all they talk about. Right? They complain.

I hear the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) mumble all the time about how, you know, we don't do everything that we should be doing. But, meanwhile, we did a one-in-700-year. Under his government they wouldn't have done anything, because you know what? The proof is in the pudding. In '97 they didn't do anything and the member for Emerson was part of that and he didn't do anything. And, well, the member—the Leader of the Opposition was part of that, too, only for a part of the time when he decided to quit and run away because it was just too hard to do.

So, you know, I—the pony-and-carts party over there, you know, the PCs, it's definitely the pony-and-carts party because they still believe in the failed policies of the 1900s. I mean, they don't want to flood proof the Red River—or the Assiniboine valley, Mr. Speaker. I mean, they look at all this stuff and they talk about it in a—with a big yap. All the time from their side, you hear, all the time they're heckling our side about all the wonderful things we're building, how great Manitoba's doing, you know.

* (11:30)

I know that the members on that side of the House actually believe that 2.5 per cent increase in funding to post-secondary education is a cut, but it's 2.5 per cent more. But that's a cut to them, right? They talk about how great it was in Alberta. For the longest time, that's what we heard from them: how wonderful Alberta was. It was the land of milk and honey—and Saskatchewan. And then, you know what? When the flood happens—whoa, you hear nothing from them about Alberta. It's quiet because they know that Alberta is now looking at having to invest the kind of money that we did. And you know

what? How are they going to pay for it? Certainly not with \$550 million worth of cuts. You know, Mr. Speaker, it's just hypocrisy at its best.

You know, the so-called Leader of the Opposition—this is a guy that wants to lead our province—ran away during the flood of '97—ran off. We're in the middle of the—one of the biggest floods, other than 2011, one of the biggest floods, and he runs away to Ottawa. And this guy wants to lead the province? Mr. Speaker, I just—I think it's unbelievable.

He's recklessly advocating for—you know what he also advocated for? He advocated for stopping the floodway building. He didn't want to build the floodway. He didn't want us to expand it. He said we shouldn't do it. Well, it's no wonder, Mr. Speaker. I mean, he stands in the middle of the Portage Diversion. He doesn't want the floodway built. Of course, he doesn't agree with our vision of helping and—people in Manitoba, and flood proofing all Manitobans, not just certain ones. All Manitobans deserve that flood proofing. And that's what we're going to do.

And I support this resolution and I thank all of the people who worked tirelessly on this flood for all of their work, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): It's quite a resolution that we have before us, Investment in Flood Protection Initiatives, something this government wouldn't know anything about, Mr. Speaker.

And we've heard a great deal of rhetoric from the last two speakers in regards to this particular flood. And I must say to start with, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, there is a responsibility in being able to be a Member of Parliament, as well as a member of the Legislature, but I can tell the difference between the two members that have just spoken and our leader is that they will never have the persona to be elected in Parliament.

The rhetoric that has come forth from the member from the Interlake in regards to bringing this bill forward is appalling. For someone that stood up in front of his people and said, it could be worse, to come back with a resolution like this in the House, saying all of the things, applauding themselves, patting themselves on the back, for the number of things that he's saying that they're doing in here, Mr. Speaker.

He's comparing the flood of 2011 to that of 1997. Well, let's take a look at it from what actually happened. The facts are 1997 was a flood that came forward from the south into the Red River Valley. There was a dike built to prevent that dike—that flood from flooding out the city of Winnipeg, which at the time, I think, was estimated at about \$6 billion. In the flood of 2011, the action that was taken was a number of photo ops, thinking that they could drain—put a drain in and a cut to allow some water out so that they wouldn't have to flood the Lake Manitoba people, Mr. Speaker, to save the city of Winnipeg, albeit.

But the facts are that the flood of 2011 was a man-made flood on Lake Winnipeg, and this government is the one that chose to do it, Mr. Speaker. They had alternatives. They could have done other things.

But they chose to flood out the people of the Interlake, to flood out his own constituents, to flood out the people around Lake Manitoba, allow the—not support the people around lake Dauphin and many other areas of this province. And yet they come back here and try to take credit for it in a resolution like this.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is not recognized across Canada as the only place that has handled floods in the past. And there are many areas of New Brunswick, other provinces like Alberta as well.

And I guess if you go back into the vision far enough—if you go back to the vision far enough, and look at channels like the St. Mary's Channel that is on the St. Mary's river in southern Alberta, you will note that there were visionaries some 80 years ago that felt that they could manage water in southern Alberta to make sure that their people actually had water in times of drought. And it also can be used in times of flood.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a government here in Manitoba that likes to talk about how much money they spend. We know they can spend money. They are—their acronym of the spendP is quite true. They have never had a budget that they've been able to balance in Manitoba in the 14 years that they've been in government. And they have had to take from either the—they've either had to take from the rainy day fund or they've had to take from—in fact, they took \$203 million out of Hydro back in the early years of their first term to try and balance the books. The only thing that saved them from taking more is we had a drought one of those years, as the Speaker

will recall, and Hydro never made any money so they weren't able to take 75 per cent of the profits as they passed the bill to do.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution also states that this government has 'propo'—that the official opposition—and I like it.

You know, a lot of the times, this government has spent more time trying to make PC policy public than they have trying to look after their own last election promises. This idea of a 1 per cent cut to all departmental budgets is a figment of the government's imagination. We have indicated that the platform that the NDP had in the last election of having a 1 per cent efficiencies finding in the government's budgetary role is something that we have put forward, but it's not a 1 per cent cut in every department as has been reiterated a number of times by several members of the government side, including ministers.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, it's kind of ironic because when we actually agree with the government on a proposal like this that was part of their major platform in their election—of course, you can't believe them anyway, because they went ahead and said they wouldn't raise taxes and did. But when we actually picked up on something that they had in their platform, they chastised us as not being responsible. Well, it's what you do with the money that you've been given as a government in this province, not how you spend it frivolously.

We have voted against many NDP budgets and particularly this last one. Manitobans have told us all over this province not to vote for this budget of this government, Mr. Speaker, because they lied. They put a 1 per cent increase in the PST. They all like to do a lot of things to distract the attention of Manitobans away from the fact that they never looked internally to even offer to find that 1 per cent efficiency that they thought they could do in the election. They've—but, you know, and that election promise came after everybody knew that there was a flood of 2011. We knew how bad it was. They knew how bad it was across the province of Manitoba, and yet they came out with a platform that said we can find 1 per cent efficiencies and we can balance the books by 2014.

And speaking of the words that came out of the member from the Interlake's mouth about nonsense from the federal members of Parliament, Mr. Speaker, none can be more famous than the words of his own Premier (Mr. Selinger) when he said it was

nonsense for anybody to think that they would raise the PST. It just wasn't going to happen. Didn't have to do it, in the fall of 2011.

So, Mr. Speaker, nonsense is what I would put forward in relation to this resolution coming from this particular individual as the member of the Interlake, one that stood in front of many of his colleagues and constituents and said it could have been worse. You know, those are famous words that will come back to haunt him, I think, at many times, and if they—you know, there was quite an effort to make sure that he won the last election in his riding.

And it was put up as a part of a ditch from Lake St. Martin to Lake Winnipeg, but, Mr. Speaker, there was two parts. I was in the room when the government brought the emergency meeting together in August. I know that there's a minister in the room here today that was there at that meeting. It was a necessary meeting to look at an emergency situation. They were going to spend a hundred million dollars to drain water out of Lake St. Martin into Lake Winnipeg and another \$60 million to drain water out of Lake Manitoba into Lake St. Martin, but they never got anything done on that second \$60-million effort.

And now they've waited for the Lake Manitoba Lake St. Martin Regulation Review Committee to come forward with its recommendation, and they're saying that work is beginning. Well, the only work that's beginning, Mr. Speaker, is the engineering reports that would be needed and necessary for the planning of an outlet, and we don't even know which outlet the government has chosen to use yet in regards to moving that water out of Lake Manitoba into Lake St. Martin. Many are looking at the Watchorn Bay area as one of the most efficient ways of moving that money out, and I don't know if the government will move that way or not. Maybe they'd sooner blast all the rock out of the road that would be necessary instead.

* (11:40)

Mr. Speaker, the—I know that the member refers to the flood in 2011 as the flood of the millennium, as opposed to the flood of '97 as the flood of the century, and I have pointed out earlier that there is quite a difference. One was a—an event of Mother Nature, and the other one was a man-made disaster by a government. And so there is quite a difference in the outcome of how we got to the two different outcomes of the flood.

Mr. Speaker, in my minute that I have left, I just want to say the only thing I can agree with in this resolution is the very last whereas—or their very last further be it resolved, and that is to thank the dedicated emergency personnel and volunteers to work—that work to protect Manitoba communities from flooding. Those people deserve credit all over the province of Manitoba. They worked tirelessly and effort—and with great effort to try to make life better for many, many citizens in this province.

But, Mr. Speaker, I will certainly be voting against the rest of this resolution, because a government that can only pat itself on the back with this type of a resolution while 'hund'—while there's 2,000 people still out of their homes, and thousands of cases that have not been settled outside of those 2,000 in the province of Manitoba, still waiting for their claims to be looked at and reviewed, many of them basically told not to even appeal it, and some of them are just so tired of the process that they have given up on the appeal process.

So with those words, Mr. Speaker, I would—

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

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I really want to start by congratulating the member for the Interlake for bringing forward this resolution. I want to put on the record that no one has worked harder for his constituents, no one has worked harder for flood victims, no one has been more vocal about the need for long-term mitigation from the member from the Interlake. And members opposite may howl from their seats, but the people from the Interlake supported the member for the Interlake at the last election because he's such a strong spokesperson for that area.

And I want to comment, Mr. Speaker, that it's also interesting the degree to which members opposite have taken a hyperpartisan approach to what has normally been a pretty non-partisan issue. Yes, there was a debate in the '50s and '60s about the floodway. But, generally speaking, when there's a flood emergency in this province, you pull together, you work together. And we saw during the 2011 flood the degree to which members opposite started off with that approach, but certainly as time progressed and particularly under their current leader, they've taken a hyperpartisan approach. And the fact that they would vote against a resolution—and that's what they've stated is their position is—

which congratulates emergency personnel and volunteers, urges the provincial government to continue to be a national leader in flood mitigation and supports the Building and Renewal Plan for critical flood protection—well, I wonder why they would vote against it. Well, maybe it's because if they were in government, nothing would happen in terms of flood mitigation. And they've shown it.

Now, I want to say, Mr. Speaker, their approach is nothing less than bizarre. Some of the statements coming from members opposite—and I want to thank the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) for putting on the record the background of the Leader of the Opposition, who was EMO minister. I think his greatest legacy was Harold Clayton, who was fired as EMO director for travel fraud. But he—that member opposite who likes to lecture everyone, he knows better than everyone—he quit as EMO minister months before the flood and he quit provincial politics to run federally right in the middle of the flood.

Now, Mr. Speaker, he has a track record of quitting because he then ran for leader of the PC Party. He didn't win; he quit that party. He ran federally. He didn't get in Cabinet; he quit that. After the next election, we'll see whether he's a quitter again because he better watch out because we're coming after him in the next provincial election.

But how bizarre can you get? I mean, let's start, by the way, with this ridiculous comments coming from members opposite about, my God, you're going to spend eight years to do the design work, to get the environmental approvals—eight years to actually finish the job on Lake St. Martin with a permanent outlet, something they never did, Mr. Speaker, rejected by the Lyon government in '78. It's going to take eight years to protect Lake Manitoba with additional outlet.

Now, we've committed the money. We put the work in place. But you know how long it took to build the floodway? When Roblin was elected—Duff Roblin was elected in 1959—it took them nine years to build it. That's how long it takes to do the work, to do a major project. Now, members opposite wouldn't know about this because when they were in government they did absolutely nothing in terms of flood mitigation.

What did we do in our first decade? We spent a billion dollars on flood protection. Now, the member—Leader of the Opposition tried to take credit for it. Well, I want to give you the timeline. The

report was received in 2002 from KGS. The IJC report recommended two options. We chose the floodway expansion option. We took the approach of stepping-stone it up in nine—actually, 2004. We finished completing it by 2010 and we've finished subsit—according to works right now—and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, you know what it's resulted in? You know, I look at Calgary, one-in-25-year flood protection. We have one-in-700-year flood protection in Winnipeg.

And it didn't just happen—and it didn't just happen—Mr. Speaker, in terms of protecting that area. We spent \$130 million protecting the Red River Valley. And I hope members opposite are listening because I know, you know, if you look at the Minister of Local Government (Mr. Lemieux), he can tell you first-hand what was the legacy of the members opposite after the '97 flood: the premier of the day saying people who lived in a flood plain shouldn't complain. You know what we did? We came into government and we spent \$130 million to protect those people. And by the way, 2009 was a greater flood than 1950 where the 100,000 people were evacuated, 10,000 homes were destroyed and there was exactly one home impacted by basement seepage in the Red River Valley. That's the difference an NDP government makes in terms of flood mitigation.

Well, let's continue, Mr. Speaker, talking about how bizarre their comments are, how anyone at—on that side could dismiss the 2011 as a man-made flood. I don't know. I've said this before, but I'm sure they believe that the moon landing was filmed on a back lot in Hollywood.

I mean, but seriously, we had some of the most significant flooding not just here in Manitoba, but in Saskatchewan and Alberta as well. We had a one-in-350-year flood in Brandon. We had three crests on the Souris. We had a one-in-a-400-year flood, actually, in the rest of the Assiniboine. And when it came to Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin we had unprecedented flooding. It's even difficult to put in words how significant that flooding was. But members opposite want to pretend that it was somehow created. You know what it's called? A natural disaster.

And maybe they've been taking some pointers from what's been happening in Alberta, and I want to compare how different provinces approach things. Because, you know, after the 2011 flood we didn't

just dismiss it as, oh, it was a man-made flood or conspiracy theories.

And by the way, I know members opposite like to play the Winnipeg-versus-rural-Manitoba card. But never once in the 2011 flood was Winnipeg at risk, Mr. Speaker, because of what was happening on the Assiniboine. Yes, we had to make sure that we protected a whole series of areas, including, by the way, east of Portage, the communities there.

But I want to put on the record the difference between us and, again, the members opposite, because at a public meeting earlier this year the member—former member for Portage, now the Leader of the Opposition, got up and joked about flooding the city of Winnipeg. His exact words were, to a rural area, he says, how many people here would really like to flood the city of Winnipeg? But, you know, Mr. Speaker, that's the way they operate. Because you know what? They were quite prepared even this year to stand in the Portage Diversion supported by the political party and put at risk people downstream. We don't play that game. We're there for all Manitobans. It's one of the reasons we've been in government since 1999.

So putting aside all that, Mr. Speaker, I'm actually shocked that they got into the usual rhetoric. Even the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) talking about enforce union dues. What does that bring back in the way of a memory? Their leader, when he was a Member of Parliament, I think probably there were two significant things he did. He did a parody of Pink Floyd's brick in the wall and he also said that they should—he wanted the federal government to shut down the floodway because he didn't agree with the project management agreement. You know what, have you noticed a pattern with the Leader of the Opposition? He doesn't get his way, watch out. He'll either quit or he'll try and shut it down, and my warning to members opposite is you watch because you'll find that the best predictor of past behaviour—you know, future behaviour is past behaviour. And when you have a leader that was prepared to shut down the floodway because he didn't like the way it was being operated, that speaks volumes.

* (11:50)

Well, I want to do a contrast, because I hope the people in Alberta will follow The Manitoba Advantage, and that's in this resolution; we are leaders, we're international leaders.

After the 2005 flood in Alberta, what happened? They had a report that was completed in 2006. They didn't release it publicly for six years. It recommended \$300 million of mitigation. They did nothing. And what happened is they paid the price, and I'm sure they will change down the line in terms of that.

What did we do after the 2011 flood? We immediately put in place two reports. We received the reports, adopted the 126 recommendations. We put in place a budget that is going to fund the \$250 million to protect Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin. And the end result will be is we are going to do for Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin what we've done in the Red River Valley, north and south, and what we've done in Winnipeg, because that's the way you deal with this.

So I say to members opposite, you know, they're clearly not ready for prime time. They clearly have no idea how it works in terms of flooding, fighting a flood. They clearly have no idea in terms of flood mitigation. And you know what? They can go back to the 1960s, because that was really the last PC premier that did anything. I use this as a trick question, Mr. Speaker: What did the—what have the Tories done, what did they do when they're in government in the '90s, what did they build? Absolutely nothing.

Well, what we do, Mr. Speaker, we're there during floods. We're there after floods. We build for the future. That's the difference between us and them.

And I'm proud to stand here to support this resolution from one of the strongest spokespersons we have in this Legislature for flood victims, the member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff).

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for an opportunity to rise and speak to this resolution. I don't think I'll carry on with theatrics and the screaming and shouting and finger pointing that goes on from the members opposite, but I do feel that I would like to put a few truths on the record that conveniently get forgotten by the members opposite.

You know, they can talk about their flood protection, their flood mitigation 'til the cows come home, but the fact remains that Duff Roblin is the one that built the floodway, he's the one who built the Shellmouth and he's the one who built the diversion at Portage. And he fell one project short by not putting an extra outlet into Lake Manitoba, but

overall he did more to flood proof this province than the NDP have ever done in the past or ever will in the future. He was visionary. He actually built the floodway; they talk about doing things and then not doing them.

You know, in the 2012 floodway authority's annual report, they said that since building the floodway in 1968, \$32 billion in damages have been saved. Now, the NDP have been trying to tell us that since they expanded it, \$35 billion have been saved. I think they should go back and take a look at the floodway authority annual report from 2012; it's saying since '68—which is a lot more years than they're using—there's been \$32 billion worth of damage saved.

And, you know, in 1997 the Canadian-Manitoba partnership agreement on the Red River Valley flood protection funded \$130 million in enhancements to eight ring dike communities that already had ring dikes and provided for the construction of 10 additional ring dikes and some more to flood protection for those homes and farms and businesses. The agreement was negotiated by the Progressive Conservative government of the day, looking forward to bringing greater protection to Manitobans. They can talk about they did—they flood proofed the Red River Valley; it's not so. They didn't make that agreement. They didn't have the foresight to make that agreement. It was Premier Filmon and the Progressive Conservative government.

We've seen how the NDP move on flood mitigation. They—I think it was in 2005, the federal government advanced a considerable chunk of money to the Province to enhance the Shellmouth spillway and possibly put some gates in the spillway and create more water retention in that area of the province. The feds put up the money. The money disappeared. Nothing's happened to this date on that particular project, it just disappeared.

So the—another one is that back a few years ago the—in fact, in June of 2006 the Doer government promised a permanent one-in-a-hundred-year flood protection for the city of Brandon, but nothing came out of that. Five years later the flood of 2011 hit the city and nothing had been done. So five years—they can talk about their projects. They can talk about a new outlet into Lake Manitoba. They're talking about it being completed by 2021 or whatever—seven years from now—actually, nine years from the time of the flood. They can talk about it, but they don't complete the projects anyhow. So it really doesn't matter. They

could put all of the rhetoric on the record they want to put on the record, but they have no intention of doing it or carrying through their promises, and they've proved that over and over again with promises they made before the last election and promises they've made since the last election.

You know, after the Meadow Lea meeting which has already been mentioned this morning, the chair of the Lake Manitoba Flood Rehabilitation Committee stated that it's clearly evidence—the 'prov'—evident that the Province has not fulfilled its obligation to the federal government with respect to the application for compensation. Provincial agricultural minister has not been diligent with his efforts to find a solution, clearly evident by staying away from the Marquette meeting on February the 22nd.

Now, they can talk all they want. They can blame the feds. It's the feds' fault that these things aren't happening. They continuous blame them, and you hear the remarks of the member from St. Norbert slicing and dicing the feds. If the feds aren't co-operating, do you blame them with that kind of rhetoric coming out? Going after them, blaming them—blame them for everything that goes wrong and then ask them for money. Can we get a little more here, please? You know, all this is—all this stuff is empty promises.

You know, Lake Manitoba was a man-made flood. It was done to protect other areas of the province. The people there realize that. But my constituency prior to the boundaries changes included all the area from the southern tip of Lake Manitoba up to Crane River on the west side and, you know, that's a pretty large area of the province

was impacted pretty severely by the flooding. And the minister of Water Stewardship of the day never once—not once—showed up on the west side of that lake, never once went out and talked to the people and heard what was happening in their lives because of the man-made flood. And I find that—that's terrible. It's—and never once did that minister show up out there. That shows a lot of integrity, I'll tell you.

You know, in the fall of—in November of 2010 that minister of Water Stewardship, the minister of the day, who apparently was so poor at her portfolio that they did away with the whole department—but when the member from Russell, Mr. Derkach, asked about preparation for flooding, she—her response was: he must be crazy. There's no flooding. There—the flooding's not going to happen. This was in November of 2010; 2011 we had the flood.

I heard the member for Interlake refer to the '97 flood in the Red River Valley and refer to the 2011 flood and—perspectives. And he said that the '97 flood wasn't near as bad because the water ran out and they planted the crops that year. There's a dynamic difference between a river valley flood and a lake flood, and if the member can't even recognize that he probably has no right to even stand up and speak to one of these resolutions because he can't even get that difference through his mind.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please.

When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member for Agassiz (Mr. Briese) will have two minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 23, 2013

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