

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 6, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom 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 afternoon, everyone. Welcome back. Please be seated.

Introduction of New Members

Mr. Speaker: I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a letter indicating the election of Mr. Doyle Piwniuk as a member for the constituency of Arthur-Virden, and I hereby table the notice of return of the member elected.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you Doyle Piwniuk, the member for the constituency of Arthur-Virden, who has taken the oath and signed the roll and now claims the right to take his seat.

Mr. Speaker: On behalf of all honourable members, I wish to welcome you to your—to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and to wish you well in your parliamentary career.

Also, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a letter indicating the election of Mr. Shannon Martin as a member for the constituency of Morris, and I hereby table a notice of return of the member elected.

Mr. Pallister: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you Shannon Martin, member for the constituency of Morris, who has taken the oath and signed the roll and has now claimed the right to take his seat.

Mr. Speaker: On behalf of all honourable members, I wish to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly

of Manitoba and to wish you well in your parliamentary career.

Point of Order

Ms. Christine Melnick (Riel): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

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

Ms. Melnick: I rise of a—on a point of order to apologize for the misleading statements that I made to committee on 30 May, 2012. At that time I was dealing with undiagnosed diabetes. I want to assure the House that at no time was there a deliberate attempt to mislead this House. On my own initiative I contacted the Ombudsman directly to correct the record from the 30 May, 2012, committee meeting, and I accept the Ombudsman's report.

Mr. Speaker, I make no apology for the fact that people were invited to the Manitoba Legislature to watch the resolution on settlement services and, by implication, immigration in general. It was right to invite people to the Legislature and it was right to fight for the Manitoba model of settlement services, and I will continue to fight to make sure that Manitoba is a place that welcomes the world as I always have.

One last point, Mr. Speaker. My family has been fighting the good fight for three generations, over 100 years. Although I now sit on this side of the House and am not a member of NDP caucus, I can assure all it matters not where I sit in this House and it matters not the label that I have been given as to my political affiliation. I want to make clear that I am, always have been and always will be a New Democrat.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no other comments from members, while I did not hear a particular breach of a rule referenced in this matter, so I must respectfully rule that there is no point of order, but I thank the honourable member for Riel for her comments here this afternoon.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Now, we'll move to routine proceedings. Introduction of bills. Seeing no bills, we'll move on to petitions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no petitions, we'll move on to committee reports.

The honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Wight), with a committee report.

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs First Report

Ms. Melanie Wight (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, yes, it's the confusion of being over here.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on December 16, 2013 at 2:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- *Annual Report of the Children's Advocate for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013*

Committee Membership

- Ms. ALLAN
- Mr. ALTEMEYER
- Mrs. DRIEDGER
- Mrs. MITCHELSON
- Mr. JHA
- Mrs. ROWAT
- Mr. SARAN
- Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS
- Mr. WIEBE
- Ms. WIGHT (Chairperson)
- Mr. WISHART

Your Committee elected Mr. SARAN as the Vice-Chairperson.

Official Speaking on Record

- *Darlene MacDonald, Children's Advocate*

Report Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

- *Annual Report of the Children's Advocate for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013*

Ms. Wight: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Minto (Mr. Swan), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (13:40)

Mr. Speaker: Any further committee reports?

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs Second Report

Ms. Wight: Well, I'm winning today, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its Second Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in the Legislative Building:

- *December 22, 2004 (3rd Session – 38th Legislature)*
- *May 2, 2006 (4th Session – 38th Legislature)*
- *July 10, 2008 (2nd Session – 39th Legislature)*
- *May 25, 2009 (3rd Session – 39th Legislature)*
- *March 10, 2010 (4th Session – 39th Legislature)*
- *May 20, 2010 (4th Session – 39th Legislature)*
- *June 13, 2012 (1st Session – 40th Legislature)*
- *June 17, 2013 (2nd Session – 40th Legislature)*
- *January 9, 2014 (3rd Session – 40th Legislature)*

Matters under Consideration

- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2003 including the conduct of the 38th Provincial General Election June 3, 2003*

- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2008*
- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2009*
- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2010 including the conduct of the Concordia by-election March 2, 2010*
- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2011 including the conduct of the 40th Provincial General Election October 4, 2011*
- *Permanent Voters List Study – Report dated June 2013*
- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2012 including the conduct of the Fort Whyte by-election September 4, 2012*

Committee Membership

Committee membership for the December 22, 2004 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. ASHTON*
- *Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK*
- *Mr. CUMMINGS*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Hon. Mr. DOER*
- *Ms. IRVIN-ROSS (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Ms. KORZENIOWSKI (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. LOEWEN*
- *Mr. MURRAY*
- *Mr. PENNER*
- *Mr. SCHELLENBERG*

Substitution made during committee proceedings on December 22, 2004:

- *Hon. Mr. MACKINTOSH for Mr. SCHELLENBERG*

Committee membership for the May 2, 2006 meeting:

- *Mr. DERKACH*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Hon. Mr. DOER*
- *Mr. HAWRANIK*
- *Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX*
- *Hon. Mr. MACKINTOSH*
- *Mr. MARTINDALE*
- *Mrs. MITCHELSON*

- *Mr. REID (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. ROCAN*
- *Mr. SCHELLENBERG (Vice-Chairperson)*

Committee membership for the July 10, 2008 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. ASHTON*
- *Ms. BRICK (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Hon. Mr. DOER*
- *Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Mr. HAWRANIK*
- *Ms. HOWARD (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. MCFADYEN*
- *Hon. Ms. MCGIFFORD*
- *Hon. Mr. SWAN*
- *Mrs. TAILLIEU*

Substitution made during committee proceedings on July 10, 2008:

- *Mr. FAURSCHOU for Mr. MCFADYEN*

Committee membership for the May 25, 2009 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK*
- *Mr. DERKACH*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Hon. Mr. DOER*
- *Mr. FAURSCHOU*
- *Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Ms. HOWARD (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mrs. TAILLIEU*
- *Hon. Mr. SWAN*
- *Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK*
- *Substitution MAGUIRE for Mr. FAURSCHOU*

Committee membership for the March 10, 2010 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. BLAIKIE*
- *Ms. BRICK (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. DERKACH*
- *Mr. EICHLER*
- *Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Hon. Ms. HOWARD*
- *Mr. MCFADYEN*
- *Mr. REID (Chairperson)*
- *Hon. Mr. SELINGER*
- *Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS*
- *Hon. Mr. SWAN*

Committee membership for the May 20, 2010 meeting:

- Mr. ALTEMEYER (Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. BLAIKIE
- Ms. BRICK (Vice-Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Mr. EICHLER
- Mr. GOERTZEN
- Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS
- Mr. MCFADYEN
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Hon. Mr. SELINGER
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS

Committee membership for the June 13, 2012 meeting:

- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. EWASKO
- Mr. GAUDREAU (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. GOERTZEN
- Hon. Ms. HOWARD
- Mr. MARCELINO
- Mr. MCFADYEN
- Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF (Chairperson)
- Mr. SCHULER
- Hon. Mr. SELINGER
- Hon. Mr. SWAN

Committee membership for the June 17, 2013 meeting:

- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Mr. HELWER
- Hon. Ms. HOWARD
- Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS
- Mr. JHA
- Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF (Chairperson)
- Mr. PALLISTER
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Hon. Mr. SELINGER

Your Committee elected Mr. JHA as the Vice-Chairperson.

Committee membership for the January 9, 2014 meeting:

- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. GOERTZEN

- Mr. HELWER
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Mr. SARAN (Vice-Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. SELINGER
- Hon. Mr. SWAN
- Mr. WIEBE
- Ms. WIGHT (Chairperson)

Officials speaking on the record at the December 422, 2004 meeting:

- Mr. Richard D. Balasko, Chief Electoral Officer

Officials speaking on the record at the May 2, 2006 meeting:

- Mr. Richard D. Balasko, Chief Electoral Officer

Officials speaking on the record at the July 10, 2008 meeting:

- Mr. Richard D. Balasko, Chief Electoral Officer

Officials speaking on the record at the May 25, 2009 meeting:

- Mr. Richard D. Balasko, Chief Electoral Officer

Officials speaking on the record at the March 10, 2010 meeting:

- Mr. Richard D. Balasko, Chief Electoral Officer

Officials speaking on the record at the May 20, 2010 meeting:

- Ms. Shipra Verma, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer

Officials speaking on the record at the June 13, 2012 meeting:

- Ms. Shipra Verma, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer

Officials speaking on the record at the June 17, 2013 meeting:

- Ms. Shipra Verma, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer

Officials speaking on the record at the January 9, 2014 meeting:

- Ms. Shipra Verma, Chief Electoral Officer

Report Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

- Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2003 including the

*conduct of the 38th Provincial General Election
June 3, 2003*

Reports Considered but not Passed

Your Committee considered the following reports but did not pass them:

- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2008*
- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2009*
- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2010 including the conduct of the Concordia by-election March 2, 2010*
- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2011 including the conduct of the 40th Provincial General Election October 4, 2011*
- *Permanent Voters List Study – Report dated June 2013*
- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2012 including the conduct of the Fort Whyte by-election September 4, 2012*

Ms. Wight: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall, that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Any further committee reports? Seeing none, we'll move on to tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

2014 Sochi Winter Olympics

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): Every four years, athletes from across Canada come together on the ice, on the slopes and the track to compete in the Winter Olympics. In Canada we gather in our homes, over pints or in the streets to cheer on our fellow Canadians.

This year at the 2014 Sochi Olympics we watched stellar performances, supported a record 221 athletes compete and celebrated 25 medals. Congratulations to all Canadian athletes, including the many Manitobans who were part of the Canadian Olympic team.

After years of training and perseverance, in the face of emotional challenges and physical injuries, these star athletes attained the highest honour for excellence in sport when they represented Canada in the Winter Olympics.

For many athletes, the barriers around succeeding in their sport are meant to be broken. Nowhere in this—nowhere is this more apparent than during the Paralympic Winter Games, where Olympians with physical disabilities, visual impairments, amputees or spinal cord injuries compete in various events. In 2014, Sochi Paralympic Winter Games will take place between March 7th to the 16th. And good luck to Manitoban Dennis Thiessen, who will compete in the wheelchair curling.

Canadian athletes seem to excel in every Olympic Games, and this year was no different. Manitoba curling rock stars Team Jones won gold as the first and only team to ever sweep women's curling, winning every game they played. Skip Jennifer Jones, Kaitlyn Lawes, Jill Ossifer—or Officer, sorry—and Dawn McEwen all played spectacularly, defeating Sweden 6-3 in one of the closest games of the tournament.

Manitoban athletes also showed us their exceptional skills in hockey, with both Jonathan Toews and Jocelyne Larocque scoring goals for Team Canada. Larocque assisted one of the most important goals of the nail-biting gold medal game against United States. Not to be outdone, Toews scored one of the three winning goals in the men's gold medal game against Sweden.

We are extremely proud of all of our Manitoban athletes. Megan Imrie, Brittany Schussler, Ryan Fry and alternate Bailey Bram showed the world what Manitobans can do in biathlon and speed skating, as well as in curling and hockey. Figure skaters Rudi Swiegers and Paige Lawrence, honorary Manitobans who trained in Virden, also helped showcase the talent that we have here in Manitoba.

From family and friends to teachers, co-workers and neighbours, for every Manitoban that competes in the Olympic Games, an entire province is cheering them on. When we see another Manitoban reaching the podium, a collective cheer is heard around the curling clubs, classrooms, living rooms and offices around the province. I look forward to honouring our athletes and further celebrating their successes in the near future.

To all the families, coaches and volunteers, we thank you for your dedication. For many long hours spent driving athletes to practice, buying their equipment and for offering their encouragement and kindness, we cannot forget those who support our athletes and help them on the way to becoming Olympians.

The real power of the Winter Olympics is in the ability—I'm sorry—to bring us together. Whether an athlete is from Ste. Anne, Manitoba, or Calgary, Alberta, it's hard not to feel pride in seeing the Canadian flag raised over the podium at Sochi. With two gold medals in men's and women's curling, two gold medals in men and women's hockey, I can't think of a more truly Canadian double-double.

Congratulations again to all athletes. You've done us proud. Merci. Thank you.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): First of all, I'd like to thank the minister for his statement. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think there is a moment as proud as when we watch a young Canadian, a beautiful, bright, young Canadian standing on the podium, our national anthem plays and the flag rises up and they receive a medal. And I speak for millions of Canadians who, when we watch that, we have something in our eye, something seems to be troubling us and we have to reach for a Kleenex. It is really one of those amazing and proud moments that pulls a nation together. It is with great pride to rise today as a Manitoban, as a Canadian and as a supporter of our Olympic athletes and congratulate all of our great athletes for their performance in the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

Canada once again showed its prowess and our dominance of all things winter. Canada has 10 gold medals and placed third in the overall medal count with a total of 25 medals. Of particular importance is the success that our Manitoban athletes achieved in Sochi this year. Manitoba-based Jennifer Jones' curling team made our province and our nation proud bringing home the gold medal in women's curling. The team included Jennifer Jones, Jill Officer, Kaitlyn Lawless, Dawn Askin and Coach Janet Arnott. Winnipeg-born Jonathan Toews helped the men's hockey team clinch another gold medal against the Swedes. Jocelyne Larocque from Ste. Anne, Manitoba, for her role on the women's hockey team in helping them to defeat the US team and win for Canada another gold medal. Ryan Fry, a Winnipeg-born curler, helped Team Brad Jacobs from northern Ontario to win the gold medal in men's curling.

We would also like to commend those athletes from Manitoba who, while they did not win a medal, still made us enormously proud answering our country's call to the highest honour of sport. Megan Imrie from Falcon Lake completed in biathlon. Brittany Schussler from Winnipeg competed in speed skating.

Mr. Speaker, we now look upon the Paralympics and we hope for a similar result.

Thus, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus and all Manitobans, I would like to congratulate our Manitoba and Canadian athletes, coaches, staff and, yes, families for their performance in the 2014 Sochi Winter Games and let them know they stand—that we stand very, very proudly behind them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I want to join other members of the Legislature in congratulating our fabulous Olympic team, our Canadian team, and in particular those Manitoba athletes who competed and did so well.

It is phenomenal to have a curling team from Manitoba—Jennifer Jones, Dawn McEwen, Kaitlyn Lawes and Jill Officer—all the way through without being defeated and win the gold medal. It's captured the hearts and the spirits of—and sent, I think, Manitobans into ecstasy when we saw it happen.

At the same time, it's so important to acknowledge the contributions of Jonathan Toews and of Jocelyne Larocque to the men's and women's hockey teams. And they made very significant contributions, and as part of that team effort winning both gold medals for Canada was, you know, an extraordinary accomplishment if you look back over the many years of the Olympics. It's not been all that often that we've been able to have both those hockey gold medals.

* (13:50)

But as well as being proud of our Olympians who won medals, we are also proud of those who made it to the Olympics, people like Brittany Schussler, Megan Imrie and others. I think that just

getting to the Olympics has to be recognized for the extraordinary achievement that it is and for the ability of athletes and the dedication of athletes just to get to that level.

But I also want to speak briefly and to thank all those volunteers and coaches who have worked at any level in Manitoba, because that grassroots effort, helping any child in athletics, is so important to building the prowess which becomes—makes it possible for some to do and to do extraordinarily well and will—win Olympic medals.

And, of course, we think ahead to the 'pariolympics.' It is great to see the 'pariolympics' getting the recognition that it deserves, and we look forward to our Manitoba and Canadian athletes doing well. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any further ministerial statements?

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of the honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today students from Collège BÉliveau, who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Health (Ms. Selby).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Assistant Deputy Minister Premier's Comments

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): It's good to see all the members back, Mr. Speaker. Nice to have everyone back together again, earlier than usual.

On April 20th, 2012, the Premier, in question period, informed this House that an assistant deputy minister of Immigration, a Mr. Ben Rempel, had acted alone and without political influence of any kind in assisting in the organization of what we believe to be a partisan political protest rally. We know now that the statement that the Premier made was not truthful.

On what date did the Premier become aware that he had unintentionally misled this House?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, members will recall that in April 2012 the federal government decided to make changes in the way settlement services were delivered in Manitoba, and

we resolved to do something about that. That became a resolution to be debated in this House, a resolution for which we thought would be all-party support.

My Cabinet, caucus and senior staff were all involved in inviting people down to the Legislature to hear this very 'indeportant'—very important debate. Prior to the debate, the former minister had directed her civil service to invite members down to the Legislature. She did this without the input from senior staff, Cabinet or caucus, Mr. Speaker, and then later on put some misleading information on the record, which she has corrected, taken responsibility for and apologized in this House for today.

Mr. Pallister: Well, that answer was more deflection than addressing the actual question, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier has indicated that he was not intentionally placing the blame on a civil servant in interviews with the press, even though his prior words have had that effect. He has also indicated that he was not in possession of the facts.

My question is simple and it is: On what date did he take possession of the facts?

Mr. Selinger: As I said, this incident occurred with the decision of the federal government in April of 2012. Members of the public made complaints to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman launched an investigation in the spring of 2012, and during the course of that investigation, it came to my attention—during the summer of 2012, it came to my attention that the former minister had directed the civil service to invite members down to the Legislature.

My expectation was—is that the member would fully co-operate with the Ombudsman and declare what her role was in those events and she had done—had did that on her own initiative, Mr. Speaker, and we appreciate that she did fully co-operate with the Ombudsman's investigation.

Mr. Pallister: Well, the Premier's referenced a lot of entities in his response, but not himself, Mr. Speaker. The federal government isn't what I'm asking about. Members of the public, that's not what I'm asking about. The Ombudsman's report's not what I'm asking about.

And the Premier has an opportunity to be forthright, not evasive. At times the greatest enemy of truth is silence, Mr. Speaker. This is a problem. This issue's become a problem of the Premier's own making. And I'm giving him the opportunity, rather than perpetuating the issue, to simply be frank and

answer a simple question, not with muddiness or obfuscation but with clarity.

I ask him again: On what date did he become aware that he had previously misinformed the House?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, as I just previously answered, during the course of the Ombudsman's investigation, it came to my attention in the summer of 2012 that the member had directed the civil service to invite members of the public down to the Legislature to hear the debate on this very important resolution about the future of immigration and settlement services in Manitoba, something of great importance to everybody.

I've also made it very clear, Mr. Speaker, that it was in a matter of important public debate; caucus members, Cabinet members, senior staff were all involved in inviting the public down to the Legislature.

And that's what happened. It was in the summer of 2012.

Tax Increases NDP Election Promise

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are tired of the tax-and-spend policies of this NDP government. We know during the last election that the NDP promised not to raise taxes, but did they keep that promise to Manitobans? No, they did not.

My question is for the Minister responsible for Jobs and the Economy: Did she call on her colleague the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) to review—to reverse this harmful decision to increase the PST on the backs of hard-working Manitobans?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): I thank the member opposite, who's new in this critic role; at least I think I do, so far, thank her and welcome her to her new role.

I will say to the member that she will have seen yesterday, I hope, that we presented to Manitobans the plan for \$5.5 billion of investment into Manitoba's infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. We know that we have had sage advice, as we have conducted round tables throughout Manitoba, from industry leaders, from community leaders, from elected officials that what we need to do is invest in core infrastructure that is going to help to continue to drive our economy so we can continue to see steady growth and have good jobs for our young people.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, an increase in taxes does not create jobs. An increase in taxes does not create economic growth in a province. It's a simple fact, perhaps economics 101 even.

But, Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Jobs and the Economy: Did she call on the Minister of Finance to reverse their ill-thought-out decision to hike the PST right after they promised not to?

Ms. Oswald: I would also inform the member that part of the discussion that happened during the round tables from industry leaders and elected officials and community leaders was to ensure that we had a third party come in and do some analysis of our investment and what the implications of that investment would be.

And I believe that the Conference Board of Canada has completed economics 101, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell her that they say very clearly in their third-party report that for every dollar that we invest in this core infrastructure, it will be a benefit of \$1.16 to our economy. It will mean—it is economics 101 just as she says—a boost to the economy of \$6.3 billion, a boost to our exports of \$5.4 billion, a boost to retail sales, \$1.4 billion. Sounds pretty good—

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

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Jobs and the Economy should presumably be responsible for developing policies that create jobs and boost economic prosperity.

Well, Mr. Speaker, why, then, is she so intent on supporting policies like increasing taxes, which hinder the ability of reaching these very goals?

* (14:00)

Ms. Oswald: Yes, Mr. Speaker, if I could just add, the Conference Board of Canada determines that these investments of \$5.5 billion will create more than 58,900 jobs.

Provincial Deficit Government Spending Record

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, I regret very much to remind the House that under this NDP government the debt for the Province of Manitoba now stands at \$30 billion and growing. It's an unfortunate milestone that has implications for every Manitoba family and is a sad legacy for our

children. It's equivalent to \$25,000 per person, and I further remind this NDP government that the debt has grown over \$10 billion in just the last five years.

Mr. Speaker, will this NDP government admit that their legacy is one of financial mismanagement and uncontrolled spending that is digging our province deeper and deeper into debt?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the debt as a proportion of the economy is smaller than it was when the members opposite were in government. They—their debt as a proportion of the GDP was 33 per cent. Ours is substantially less than that. The cost of servicing the debt under them was 13.3 cents of every dollar went to servicing the debt. Under this government the cost of servicing the debt is less than 6 cents on the dollar.

Mr. Friesen: And the Premier knows full well that interest rates then were one—were three times what they are now.

But, Mr. Speaker, I remind this First Minister that the—in the most enviable conditions, that this government has failed year after year to address the real issue, which is their spending addiction at a time of record low interest rates, a time of record transfer payments, a time of record increases to government revenues. And in these conditions, the NDP government doubles the provincial debt, threatening government programs and hurting Manitoba families.

Mr. Speaker, today I table a chart that clearly shows the doubling of the Province's debt from 1999 'til today.

Why should Manitobans now believe anything this government has to say when its mismanagement record is so disastrous?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's information. I hope he looks at last year's budget. And I know he'll look very carefully at this year's budget and he will see that the debt is smaller share of the economy than it ever was at any time when the members opposite were in government, that the number of people working in Manitoba is the highest it's ever been in the history of the province.

And I know that they have said they would cancel three quarters of all the infrastructure projects we've done. I know they would cancel personal-care homes. I know they would cancel schools. I know they would cancel investments in roads and flood protection. And we also know, because they've said

this over and over again, that they would lay off hundreds of people, thousands of people: teachers, nurses, civil servants and police officers. That is the formula to go backwards.

We have a formula that will grow good jobs for young people in Manitoba, have a steadily growing economy and expand the opportunities for all Manitobans to have a prosperous future.

Mr. Friesen: Well, Mr. Speaker, this First Minister wants to talk about previous budgets. Speaking of previous budgets, only two years ago the Finance minister stood in this room and submitted projections about how much money the government would spend in this fiscal period. And that document's right here, and in that document it clearly showed that. But in the new quarter 3 results, it's clearly showing that they're missing their own projections spectacularly. This government is on pace to spend more than \$153 million more than they projected in their own document.

Mr. Speaker, what reason do Manitobans possibly have to trust this government today when they make new promises about reducing spending, when the evidence clearly shows that they are breaking their promises and they just can't manage?

Mr. Selinger: If the member opposite looks at budget papers, he will see that government spending as a proportion of the economy is actually down, that most job creation has been in the private sector, Mr. Speaker. But because of our approach to growing the economy, we're seeing more people work ever than in the history of this province of Manitoba. Wages are going up. People are buying homes in Manitoba.

People are getting a good education in Manitoba. And when they live and work in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, they see the lowest costs for a new graduate, the lowest taxes for a new graduate in a country, because there's a graduate tuition tax rebate which gives a young person 60 per cent of their tuition back when they live and work in the great province of Manitoba.

Infrastructure Budget Government Record

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, the NDP claim to have suddenly seen the light and now infrastructure is important. Let's see just how important it has been.

In 2009, they underspent their budget for infrastructure by \$439 million; 2010, down

\$501 million; 2011, \$466 million; 2012, down \$483 million. Mr. Speaker, the NDP record is clear: They have underspent the infrastructure budget by \$1.9 billion over the last four years, a cut of 27 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans don't believe the NDP when they make promises about infrastructure.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I love Tories talking about infrastructure, because it's all talk, Mr. Speaker.

When they were in government, they spent a grand total, in their last year in government, of \$172 million. Mr. Speaker, we've already tripled that with a five-year plan we announced yesterday which commits to \$3.2 billion in infrastructure invested in roads and \$320 million for floods and \$1.5 billion for our municipalities.

I wonder if the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) will do what he didn't do last year. He got up and called for an infrastructure project which we delivered on, then voted against the budget. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, with the budget we're about to deliver, which is going to have a lot for infrastructure, if he's going to actually vote for it.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, the NDP raised the gas tax and promised it would all go to infrastructure; it didn't. They raised the vehicle registration fee, all going to infrastructure; again, same broken promise. Last year, a 14 per cent PST increase, and yet nothing to infrastructure despite NDP promises.

Manitobans no longer believe the NDP.

Mr. Ashton: Well, you know, I know a lot of Manitobans have been talking over the last period of time about the problem that members opposite have with scissors. I must say I'm not sure I'm in the category of suggesting that they would be snipping away, so let me tell you what they did when they were in government when the Leader of the Opposition was a key member of that Cabinet, because what they did, Mr. Speaker, they raised the gas tax and then they cut expenditures in highways.

In their final year, they spent \$90 million in terms of capital. This year, this past year, we have budgeted \$462 million.

And when you see the budget, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell members opposite, the theme of the budget, when it comes to infrastructure, is you ain't seen nothing yet.

Mr. Helwer: No, Mr. Speaker, it's more we can't believe anything yet.

The NDP continue to mislead Manitobans about infrastructure spending. We drive over deteriorating roads, suffer through sewer backups, water main breaks and detour around closed and missing bridges.

Manitobans have had enough of the NDP infrastructure lies.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the members opposite are talking about driving over our roads, because I hope the member opposite had the opportunity to drive across Victoria Avenue, because, by the way, he stood up and called for action on Victoria Avenue we've delivered on, and he still voted against the budget.

If he gets the opportunity to drive west from Brandon, he will see Highway No. 1. It's now four lanes. Again, who did it? Not the Conservatives. It was the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, I could take him on a virtual tour of Manitoba, and I want to guarantee him one thing. On his drive home to Brandon this summer, next summer, the following summer and the summer after that—in fact, for every summer of our five-year plan—I'm going to apologize in advance for construction delays, because we're investing \$320 million in Highway 1. I wonder again if he's going to vote for or against that.

EIA Housing Allowance Increase Request

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Manitoba's Progressive Conservatives have been calling for an increase to the EIA housing allowance for over a year now. We, along with groups like Make Poverty History, recognize there is a huge need to increase support for safe and healthy housing. This government has had 14 years to deal with this issue.

Will the minister indicate today whether this government has heard the call to increase the EIA housing allowance?

* (14:10)

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): I thank the member for the question.

We know very clearly from advocates around Manitoba—from all Manitobans, in fact, Mr. Speaker, who want to see nobody living in poverty—that the best possible way out of poverty is to get a good job.

We are absolutely committed to ensure that those that are living on income assistance receive more to help them through that transition into work. We know that through our sustainable employment strategy that the initiatives that are coming forward are working. We're seeing more individuals move from EIA into work.

But further, we know that there's more to do beyond that, Mr. Speaker, and we're very committed to do that.

Low-Income Manitobans Increase Request

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, it's very difficult to turn up for work if you have no place to hang your hat when you go home.

This government has given itself a raise with the vote tax yet hasn't found the money to help those with limited and fixed incomes.

Government is about spending priorities. Will this government change its priorities and spend their vote tax money to better help Manitoba families with limited and fixed incomes?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): Well, Mr. Speaker, our priorities have always been to bring forward initiatives and investments for all Manitobans, not just the privileged few. It's why we have provided more assistance through RentAid. It's why we have worked very hard to protect home care and not privatize it as members opposite would have. It's why we've worked very hard to ensure it that we have free cancer drugs for those people going through, arguably, the most difficult journey of their lives. It's why we've worked very hard to ensure that we can protect universal health care.

All of these things help all Manitobans, not just a privileged few.

EIA Housing Allowance Increase Request

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Justice Hughes' report on Phoenix Sinclair contains recommendation No. 51, that the social assistance housing rates be raised to at least 75 per cent of the market median rates. This wasn't done for the privileged few; this is done for the children of Manitoba. This reinforces what we and others have been saying all along.

When will the minister take real action to help Manitoba families and raise the housing allowance?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): Mr. Speaker, do you suppose that's the attitude they had on the Cabinet table when they clawed back the National Child Benefit? These are crocodile tears indeed.

I would say to the member opposite that we're going to continue to invest in those that need income assistance. We're going to continue to invest in those that want to move from welfare to work, because we know that you're always better off working. You will always have more hope, more dignity, more opportunity.

And I say to the member opposite, hang on for about an hour.

Ukrainian Crisis Manitoba Position

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the government for working with us, the opposition, on Monday's planned resolution and debate regarding the serious and volatile situation in Ukraine.

In light of the Prime Minister's statement today, and I quote, "Russia's invasion of Ukraine is an act of aggression, a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty, and of international law. Canada will not recognize a referendum held in a region currently under illegal military occupation," end quote, can the Premier (Mr. Selinger) update the Legislature on the steps taken by the government of Manitoba and what other actions are being contemplated in regards to the crisis in Ukraine?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): I want to thank all members of the House for putting aside differences and concentrating on important issues. When we're going to bring the resolution on Monday, it's going to have, I believe, unanimous support of this House with respect to protecting and respect to providing comfort and resistance to what's happening in Ukraine. I'm very pleased that we were the first provincial government to offer a—to offer funding to—for humanitarian aid.

I—the Premier has talked with other premiers and other officials. I myself had occasion to congratulate Minister Baird the other day in Toronto for the efforts undertaken by the Canadian government, and we will support the federal government's efforts as

they dissuade the Russians from this illegal invasion of sovereign territory of Ukraine.

Budget 2013-2014 Infrastructure Projects

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, in 2011 the Premier said that the whole notion of increasing the PST was ridiculous. Well, in 2013 the Premier proceeded to implement this idea he himself had called ridiculous.

In the budget today, will the Premier, who misled Manitobans so badly in 2011, be announcing in this year's budget more ideas he's previously called ridiculous?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): What we will do is listen to Manitobans. And they told us that if you're going to—and they told us—and Manitobans told us, focus resources on those things that will help us grow the economy in a steady fashion, move the economy forward, and that's what we have done, Mr. Speaker.

You will see investments of every dollar in infrastructure generate a return of \$1.16 for the economy in Manitoba. You will see about 58,000 new jobs over the next five years. You will see a growth in the economy of \$6.3 billion, Mr. Speaker. And you will also see that Manitoba moves forward with more opportunities for young people to get good jobs, to get the skills they need to make their lives in Manitoba, raise their families in Manitoba and contribute to the future prosperity of this great province.

PST Increase Infrastructure Projects

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the NDP's hike in the PST has burdened small businesses. It's negatively impacted retail sales. It's slowed down our entire economy.

Manitobans were told that the PST was raised to take advantage of federally matching dollars for investing in infrastructure.

I ask the Premier today: Will the approximately \$200 million raised this budget year by the 1 per cent PST increase be fully spent on infrastructure, as promised, by March 31st of this year? And that's just in the next few weeks.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, later this afternoon the member will have the opportunity to look at the infrastructure plan that we've tabled.

That five-year plan will be worth \$5.5 billion. That five-year plan will have in there the provisions for the federal contribution to infrastructure; that is about \$47 million a year, about \$235 million over the next five years. Our plan will be \$5.5 billion. There will be room in there for the \$235 million offered by the federal government.

But I can assure you this: We will be paving roads in Manitoba. We will be providing flood protection for vulnerable communities in 2011. We will see 58,000 more jobs in Manitoba, a growth in the economy of over \$6 billion. And every dollar we invest the Conference Board of Canada said will generate \$1.16 of revenues and improvements in our economy in Manitoba.

Budget 2013-2014 Infrastructure Projects

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, we're all well aware of the wholesale infrastructure announcement yesterday and the commitments and the promises which nobody believes about infrastructure spending.

But last year in the budget the Premier said he would spend every new dollar raised by the PST increase on new infrastructure funding, in addition to the previous infrastructure funding.

As I asked repeatedly last year and I ask again: Will the Premier table today the full list of infrastructure projects specifically funded by the \$200 million raised in the two hundred–2013-2014 fiscal year, or is he going to continue to hide this information?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, all that information is available in The Five-Year Plan to Build a Stronger Manitoba report, steady growth, good jobs in Manitoba. On the last page he will see the five-year plan.

And one thing I can assure him, if for any reason such as inclement weather or a late spring or a project being delayed for whatever reason, Mr. Speaker, the amount of money that was allocated to that will be rolled over into the next year's budget and set aside. We will do early tendering so that construction companies can make sure they have the equipment and the trained personnel to do those jobs. We will make sure that the money is there for the next five years so that companies can plan ahead.

And if for any reason there's a slowdown or a delay beyond the control of the contractors or the

government or the municipalities that are doing these projects, the money will be rolled over to future years so the \$5.5 billion will be fully accounted for and made available for the 58,000 new jobs in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:20)

Winnipeg Road Repairs Five-Year Investment Plan

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, Budget 2014 is about investing in the priorities of Manitobans: good jobs, training opportunities for young people and building core infrastructure for our future.

Yesterday our government made an announcement, an historic announcement in Winnipeg about investments in roads. In fact, Mr. Speaker, my son works in the construction industry and these kind of investments are going to keep him right here in Manitoba with thousands of other young people right where they belong.

Would the Minister of the City of Winnipeg please inform the House of these investments?

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister responsible for relations with the City of Winnipeg within the Department of Municipal Government): I want to thank the member for the question.

I was very proud to stand with our Premier (Mr. Selinger) and Mayor Katz yesterday on a very historic announcement for Winnipeg: over \$250 million in five years, Mr. Speaker, \$66 million of new money. This money is going toward fixing our potholes, resurfacing streets, and the streets that are in disrepair, we're going to rebuild them. We've listened to what the citizens of Winnipeg have asked us to do. This will virtually touch every neighbourhood in the city of Winnipeg with over 100 projects starting this spring.

You know, as the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has said many times, we know that Winnipeggers really love the smell of coffee in the morning, but we want them to get used to the smell of asphalt. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Manitoba Seniors Tax Increases

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Taxes are up, inflation is up, the number of broken promises is up as well.

Seniors on a fixed income are struggling in this economy trying to pay for increases in home insurance, auto insurance, gas, groceries and PST.

This government promised no PST increase, with the Premier saying that's nonsense. They broke that promise. This government promised that the school tax would be removed from tax bills that seniors pay. They promised that in 2011. It's now 2014 and it's clear that the NDP broke that promise.

Mr. Speaker, why has this government broken not one but two promises to seniors?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): *[interjection]* Take that, Struthers. Sorry, Mr. Speaker, take that, minister of municipal affairs.

Mr. Speaker, we know that we want to work to ensure that our seniors who have built our province, who've invested in our province, in many ways have worked to protect our province, we want to do everything that we can to ensure that their lives are affordable and enjoyable, and we can do that in any number of ways. We can do that by providing tax credits, but probably one of the most important things that we can do is ensure that we protect a publicly funded health-care system. We can also do this by ensuring that we remain the most affordable province when it comes to car insurance, when it comes to home insurance.

So through a variety of measures, Mr. Speaker, we know that our seniors live in one of the most affordable provinces in the province and we aim to keep it that way.

Mr. Graydon: Well, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we know that actions speak a lot louder than the words from that side of the House.

This government is taxing some of the most vulnerable people in a society, our seniors. This government broke not one but two promises to seniors of this province. They raised their taxes and this government broke their promise to reduce education taxes. It's clear that seniors can no longer afford more NDP broken promises.

Mr. Speaker, why has this government showed such disrespect by lying to the seniors of this province?

Ms. Oswald: The actions of the member opposite—members opposite in trying to privatize home care do indeed speak much louder than words.

We can assure Manitoba seniors, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to protect publicly funded health care and we're going to protect home care. Indeed, we're going to celebrate the 40th anniversary of home care this year, where, indeed, Manitoba was a leader in the nation to ensure that that's available for seniors. We're going to ensure that free cancer drugs are available to seniors in their homes when they need those oral cancer drugs following *[interjection]*—and I can hear the member from Charleswood chirping, the same person who wrote a letter and would not support that initiative.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, this question that was posed to the minister was clear. It wasn't about home care; it was about the betrayal to seniors.

The cost of living for seniors is growing by the day with high taxes, high inflation, broken promises leading to the—leading the economy into one of the deepest holes it's ever been in Manitoba. Seniors deserve a strong economy, but they are being forced to pay more and more while they're on fixed incomes. Seniors deserve respect, not a government that lies to them and breaks promises faster than they're made.

Mr. Speaker, why has this government broken their promises to the seniors?

Ms. Oswald: Well, Mr. Speaker, the \$5.5-billion infrastructure plans that very clearly—stated by the Conference Board of Canada—will not only boost our economy by billions but, indeed, create tens of thousands of jobs, those are going to be jobs for the grandchildren of these seniors. Those are going to be jobs for the children of these seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I would also add, if the member opposite and his caucus colleagues do not know that the privatization of home care and the creation of a two-tier, American-style health-care system is a betrayal to seniors, they don't get it.

Maple Leaf Foods Future of Brandon Facility

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Mr. Speaker, there are 2,200 full-time unionized jobs at risk at Maple Leaf Foods in Brandon because of this government's misguided policies. The Minister of Agriculture is aware of this pending job loss, but he has chosen to do nothing about it.

When will the Minister of Agriculture finally recognize the impact that these job losses will have

on the economies of the Brandon region and the province as a whole?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): We do value the importance of Maple Leaf and HyLife, being one of the major pork processors in the province of Manitoba but also across Canada. And we do have continuing conversations with Maple Leaf about the importance of hired labourers and the benefit to the economy of the province of Manitoba. We continue to work with them, we continue to work with Manitoba Pork Council for the betterment of the industry but also to the environmental concerns we have in the province of Manitoba. Thank you.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, this government has caused this situation where 2,200 full-time unionized jobs are at stake at Maple Leaf Foods in Brandon. The impact on Brandon and Manitoba as a whole will be devastating should Maple Leaf Foods be forced to close.

Why will this Minister of Agriculture and this government force 2,200 full-time unionized jobs in Brandon to disappear?

Mr. Kostyshyn: And let me reassure members opposite that we are always in conversation with Manitoba Pork, with Maple Leaf and also with HyLife and the importance of the agriculture industry in the province of Manitoba. We're very proud to make the announcement that there are 62,000 jobs directly or indirectly involved in the agriculture industry in the province of Manitoba, and we will maintain the importance of that. It is definitely—importance to the province of Manitoba when we talk about a \$10.1 billion industry in the province of Manitoba, and I'm very proud to be the Agriculture Minister and I'm very proud to sit on this side of the House to support agriculture, because it definitely is an important component to the economy of the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, this government is entirely to blame should Maple Leaf Foods be forced to close. They won't be able to blame anybody else but themselves, and they won't be able to blame anybody else but themselves should the Brandon region lose 2,200 full-time unionized jobs at Maple Leaf Foods.

So when will the Minister of Agriculture finally recognize the serious nature of this issue that his government has created and help save

2,200 full-time unionized jobs in the Brandon region?

Mr. Kostyshyn: And 'obsly' COOL has a lot to do with the recommendation, and 'unfrenchly' the members opposite don't seem to want to understand the importance of international trade. I'm very proud to say that I've had the 'opportunity' to meet with the agriculture—federal Agriculture Minister through the importance of the pork industry in the province of Manitoba.

And 'obsually', the members opposite are choosing to use their words a little in an inefficient manner, but I want to assure them that we are constantly talking to the pork industry and we will be there to work with them regardless what the circumstances are, and we will continue to do that in our importance of the economy in the province of Manitoba.

Budget 2014 Government Promises

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Well, if it's one thing this government knows about, it's inefficiency, Mr. Speaker. They're all about inefficiency and they're also all about promises.

* (14:30)

You know, we've heard promises from this Premier (Mr. Selinger) before. We heard it in 2011. What did he promise? He promised to Manitobans, we're not going to raise taxes, and then what did he do? He raised the PST. He promised he wasn't going to take the vote tax, and then he turned around and he took the vote tax. He promised he was going to bring the province back into balance at a certain date, and he broke that promise.

So we're going to hear more promises just in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure of that. And the other thing I'm sure of is that those promises are going to be broken.

Why should Manitobans believe anything they're going to hear in this upcoming budget, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Municipal Government): And we promised a hospital in Steinbach, and we delivered it, and he voted against it.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, this news just in: That was promised seven years ago and it's still not done, Mr. Speaker. I'd be happy to take him out there and show

him it's still not done. And there, again, is another broken promise about trying to get something done.

Now, perhaps Manitobans would actually believe what they're going to hear in a few minutes if the government would come forward and admit that they lied to Manitobans. Maybe that would be an offering that they could actually believe what's going to come forward.

So I'll give the Premier a chance. Why not start on a fresh foot before this budget? Stand up and tell Manitobans he lied to them when he said he wouldn't increase the PST, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

I know we've had this discussion before, but I'm going to refresh the memory for those members that might have forgotten my comments and my advice to the House. When we're making reference or using words that in some cases may be deemed to be unparliamentary in reference to a particular member, they can also be, on another side, deemed to be parliamentary if they're in reference to a group and not pointed to a specific member of this House.

The comments that I just heard by the honourable member for Steinbach clearly indicated that the certain members that he was referencing—the certain member he was referencing, he used an unparliamentary word, and I'm cautioning him not to use that word in the future, and, in fact, all members of the House, I'm offering that advice to everyone.

Mr. Struthers: And we will continue to stand up for health care in Steinbach from this side of the House, and we will continue to stand up for infrastructure in the Steinbach and other areas, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to do that by dedicating money towards infrastructure, towards roads and bridges, towards flood protection, towards water.

Mr. Speaker, we're doing this because it's going to grow our economy. We're doing this because it's going to create jobs. We're doing this because the Conference Board of Canada says it's going to pay off. For every dollar we invest, that they voted against, for every dollar we invest, it's going to be \$1.16 right back into the pockets of Manitobans, right back into our economy. Shame on them for not agreeing with us. Shame on them for voting against that.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: It's now time for members' statements.

Jocelyne Larocque

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Hockey is truly Canada's game, and this year's Winter Olympics proved once again that our male and female hockey players are truly the best in the world.

One of the players on the gold medal winning women's hockey team is Jocelyne Larocque from Ste. Anne, Manitoba. On her way to the gold Jocelyne played hockey for Lorette Collegiate, becoming the first female to appear in the women—in the Winnipeg high school boys league. She joined Team Manitoba for the Esso women's nationals and for the women's under-18 provincial championships where she won top defence.

After graduating high school, Jocelyne committed to the University of Minnesota at Duluth where, in 2009, her team advanced to the Frozen Four tournament. At that same tournament, three women from Ste. Anne were part of the action, an impressive feat for a community of only 1,500. Jocelyne became the first defence from the University of Minnesota Duluth to be named to the All-American First Team.

Jocelyne was invited to training camp for the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver and was named to the final roster for the 2010 MLP Cup. But the biggest moment of her career came in 2013 when she was named to Team Canada for the 2014 Olympics held in Sochi, Russia. Team Canada easily defeated Switzerland and Finland in the opening round before running into a tough game against their biggest competition, the USA.

After a 3-2 win, Canada played Switzerland again in the playoff, setting up a gold medal game with the US one more time. Canada battled back, scoring two goals in the final minutes of the third period, plus a very—bounce off the post, sending the game into overtime. Canada scored the winning goal in the third period, capturing the gold medal.

Mr. Speaker, Jocelyne was key to Team Canada winning the gold medal, and the community of Ste. Anne and everyone in this province should be incredibly proud to call her one of our own.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Jocelyne on winning the gold medal, and I look forward to congratulating her on another gold medal in 2018. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Canadian Women's Curling Gold

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to congratulate Canada's women's curling team, led by the incredible Jennifer Jones, on their outstanding achievement at the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games. Not only did our women bring home gold the first time since Sandra Schmirler's win in 1998, they made their mark in the record books as the first women's team to go undefeated at an Olympic Games.

Right from the first game, Team Jones had their sights set on gold, and not a single team could stand in their way.

Throughout the competition, Jennifer Jones and her teammates, Kaitlyn Lawes, Jill Officer, Dawn McEwen, and their coach, Janet Arnott, were excellent embodiments of the Olympic spirit. Their athleticism, teamwork and, of course, Canadian pride, made them excellent role models for young people in our province.

When it came time to face Sweden in the gold medal game, Team Jones had the entire country behind them and a 10-hour time difference wasn't about to put a damper on the gold medal game festivities. At 7:30 in the morning, friends and dedicated fans, family packed into the team's home rink, the St. Vital Curling Club, to help cheer Team Canada to victory.

It was a historic game and I am so glad I was there to participate and share in the experience with the community. After this Olympics you can bet curling rinks across Manitoba are going to be packed with young people all dreaming about following in Jennifer's footsteps.

Mr. Speaker, while Jennifer is the face of her team and one of the most successful curlers in our history, I want to recognize everyone who has stood behind her and with her through her journey, her teammates, her coaches, her sponsors and her incredible family and friends, and of course the St. Vital Curling Club; this is their win too. Congratulations, and thank you.

Lymphedema Awareness Day

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, March 6th, today, is the Lymphedema Awareness Day. Lymphedema Awareness Day is a day of observance and proclamation, a day on which the entire lymphedema community can take action to

raise awareness of this under-reported condition and the people who live with it every day.

Lymphedema is a hidden epidemic affecting approximately 150 million people worldwide. In fact, lymphedema is recognized as one of the most feared side effects of cancer treatment, affecting approximately 25 per cent of breast cancer patients, sometimes decades after they have received treatment for cancer.

Lymphedema not only affects cancer survivors who are susceptible to developing lymphedema, anyone whose lymphatic system has been damaged whether through accident, surgery or any other means, are also at risk for contracting this debilitating disease.

Lymphedema can also be a condition that the patient is born with. It may show up in infancy, adolescence or adulthood, but the result is still chronic swelling that will often progress until it is treated.

People with lymphedema can face a life of daily expensive treatments to alleviate the pain and swelling of this disease. It can affect anyone at any age, yet most people are not aware of this serious medical condition and how to treat it.

Today I would like to recognize the Manitoba lymphedema association and, in particular, Kim Avanthay for her tireless advocacy in increasing awareness of this serious condition.

Since 2010, more than 30 municipalities across Manitoba have committed to proclaiming March 6th Lymphedema Awareness Day. These municipalities host events that raise awareness of this condition within their communities. Because of their efforts, I have introduced a private members' bill in this House to make March 6th officially Lymphedema Awareness Day in Manitoba.

To members opposite, I ask for and welcome your support for people with lymphedema and their friends, family, health-care providers and caregivers who look after them, by supporting Bill 209, The Lymphedema Awareness Day Act.

Through working together, we can make Manitoba a better place for people living with lymphedema.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:40)

Manitoba and the Philippines: The Ties That Bind

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Mr. Speaker, the personal ties between Canada and the Philippines have grown considerably in recent years. We have seen a growing movement of Filipinos to Manitoba as both permanent residents and temporary foreign workers. The labour dimension is important as Filipino newcomers help Manitoba respond to labour shortages in a number of sectors in our economy. I, personally, am a product of that labour migration.

This year over 250 Filipino-Canadians took part in the Winter Escapade tour in the Philippines, organized by the departments of Tourism and Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, reminding us of the growing people-to-people linkages between Canada and the Philippines. However, this trip also gave us all a chance to see first-hand the recent devastation that Typhoon Haiyan caused in the Philippines. The Manitoba government will do whatever we can to help ease the burden for families recovering from its impact. The provincial government recently committed a total of \$200,000 to support—for the people of the Philippines affected by Typhoon Haiyan.

Recently, I helped organize the third Tyndall Park chess tournament which was held last November at the Tyndall Park Community Centre. The organizers decided to donate 30 per cent of the registration fees to help the typhoon victims in the Philippines, displaying another great example of people-to-people linkages between our nations.

Mr. Speaker, diversity is an asset and a touchstone of both the—lives of a Manitoban in Canada. We are honoured that so many Filipinos have chosen to be part of our province while retaining strong ties to their country of origin. They continue to make an important contribution to the success that is today's Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any further members' statements? Seeing none, move on to grievances—oh, sorry, didn't see the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell).

Is it the leave of the House do revert back to members' statements? [*Agreed*]

Brandon Festival of the Arts

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, celebrating music and the arts is something that comes easy to Manitobans. This year, across our province, Manitobans will be celebrating 2014 as the Year of Music.

Our celebration of music is not limited to summer music festivals, however; it really does happen throughout the entire year. During the past month, for example, talented performers gathered in Brandon to participate in the Brandon Festival of the Arts. Since its creation in 1928, the Brandon Festival of the Arts has grown into a multidisciplinary celebration of the performing arts. This festival brings together performers of many disciplines and many skill levels to participate in workshops, concerts and evaluations. From dancers, instrumentalists, choirs and speech artists, these artists not only perform but are also evaluated by professional adjudicators from across North America. Participants are offered professional coaching and workshops, which is part of the festival's mission to help individuals develop their skills and appreciation for the arts.

The festival's approach is to have no fees to any person wishing to perform. The hope is to give an opportunity to anyone at any skill level to participate in performing arts. At its heart, the festival's goal is to get people to make the arts an important part of their lives. Scholarships, trophies, artistic development and educational support are some of the ways the Brandon Festival of the Arts encourages this. During this month-long celebration of the arts, the festival distributes thousands of dollars in scholarships to participants, from individual performers, glee clubs and choirs to school bands and dance studios, so many artists benefit from these awards.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all performers, volunteers and organizers who came together to celebrate music and the artist—and artistic expression. Each one of you is a clear example of the creativity, learning and fun that comes out of our cultural community. Organizations like the Brandon Festival of the Arts keep arts and culture alive and thriving in Manitoba.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to moving on to grievances, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to

the loge to my right where we have with us this afternoon Mr. Doug Martindale, the former member for Burrows.

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

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Grievances.

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no grievances, we'll move on with orders of the day, government business.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we could take a brief recess to allow the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) to get herself prepared to bring down the budget speech.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House for a brief recess to allow—the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen)?

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Could I also—we would agree with that. Can we ask that the bells ring for one minute prior to the commencement of the budget speech?

Mr. Speaker: I was just about to mention that, but I thank the honourable member for Steinbach.

Is there leave of the House to recess the House for a short time to allow the Minister of Finance to attend, and at the same time, with the understanding that we will ring the bells for one minute to encourage the members to return to the Chamber and also to allow for the clearing of the gallery, except for those that have passes for the budget speech? There leave? *[Agreed]*

The House recessed at 2:46 p.m.

The House resumed at 2:55 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Will the House please come to order. Order, please. Will the please House come—House, please come to order.

BUDGET ADDRESS

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Ms. Oswald), that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Motion presented.

Ms. Howard: As I look around this Chamber today, I see so many people who, like me, are proud to make Manitoba home. I was born here and I choose to make my life here. Manitoba has given me tremendous opportunities to get an education, to do interesting work that makes a difference, to start a family and build a future.

As I've travelled this province asking Manitobans about their priorities for this budget, I've heard many similar stories. Some have lived here their whole lives, taking advantage of all that Manitoba has to offer. Others have gone away to study or explore other parts of the world and then made the choice to come home. Immigrants from around the world continue to embrace Manitoba as a place to work, start new businesses and create opportunities for their children.

All of us choose Manitoba because we share common values. We pull together when our neighbours need help, as we have so many times during floods, forest fires and other disasters. We look after each other. We're the province that pioneered home care 40 years ago.

We value hard work and entrepreneurship. Our economy is one of the strongest and fastest growing in Canada. We know how to have a good time. We enjoy our parks and festivals, and we love to cheer on our home team, whether at the local rink, the MTS Centre, our new stadium or watching our Manitoba athletes at the Olympics and Paralympics, and we love a good deal. We expect government to invest wisely and achieve the best value for our dollars, just as we do in our own lives.

This is why we choose Manitoba. And when we listen to Manitobans, they tell us they want their children to find great opportunities here so that they, too, will choose Manitoba. We want our kids to get a good education, to find a good job and to afford their own home, but these are uncertain times in our world. The countries that buy what we grow and make are experiencing uneven recoveries. The global recession has been more persistent and deeper than anybody expected.

* (15:00)

Manitoba's economy has done better than most, based on the hard work of our people and the resilience of our business, but we cannot take our economic strength for granted. In the midst of this uncertainty, Budget 2014 takes a balanced approach, focusing on creating good jobs, growing our

economy and building new opportunities for young people.

This would not be possible if we listened to those calling for reckless cuts and slamming the brakes on infrastructure renewal. That was the approach taken in the 1990s when the economy last faced challenges like we face today. It didn't work then and it would not work now.

We're seeing today that where other countries have followed that harsh austerity path, their recessions have worsened, leaving more people behind and setting back the global recovery. We choose a different path. We choose a path that will create more opportunities for our young people to build their futures here, from better schools with smaller classes to more apprenticeships and training for life-long careers.

We choose a path that will build infrastructure to grow our economy, creating good jobs now and putting Manitoba on a stronger and more competitive footing for the future. And we choose a path that will make Manitoba an even better place to live. Investing in front-line services that Manitoba families count on, we're making progress towards balancing the budget in 2016-17.

Our plan focuses on these priorities because they are the priorities of Manitobans. Parents know that nothing opens more doors than a good education, and businesses tell us that their future growth depends on training more skilled workers. Many of today's most in-demand jobs are high-paying skilled trades.

Since 1999, we have more than doubled the number of apprenticeship training seats, and now we've reached a major milestone. Mr. Speaker, today, there are 10,000 registered apprentices in Manitoba, the most in our history, but people still tell us that finding an employer to hire them as an apprentice can be a barrier.

Mr. Speaker, Budget 2014 tackles this problem by providing an improved tax credit of \$5,000 to encourage employers to take on even more apprentices. Budget 2014 also creates a new bonus for employers who take on apprentices for the first time and offers a \$1,000 bursary to assist apprentices completing their final year.

I recently visited Mr. Brian Gebhardt's second-year bricklayers apprenticeship class at Red River College. One student told me how he'd worked for years as a general labourer before realizing he could build a better life for his family by training as

an apprentice. He wishes he'd known about this option earlier, and he wondered why the skilled trades hadn't been promoted more to people like him.

That day, I also met Nina Widmer. Nina is the first female bricklayer apprentice ever in her program at Red River College. With International Women's Day around the corner, I couldn't be more proud of women like Nina who are breaking down barriers and laying the groundwork for women to pursue whatever career they choose.

We know from people like Brian and Nina, who I'm pleased to welcome here today, that our schools need to do more to prepare students for careers. We all want our kids to leave high school with a good idea of where they want to go and how to get there. In the year ahead, we will work with high schools to make sure students understand all of their career options and what they need to do to pursue them, including matching employers with students so that they can get valuable first-hand experience.

We will also expand opportunities for students to get a head start by earning university or college credits while still in high school, and we will create more opportunities for students to complete an entire first year of apprenticeship while they're still in high school. Whether someone wants to become a carpenter, a teacher, an engineer or a nurse, it all starts with good schools.

Under the previous government, funding cuts to schools led to hundreds of teachers being laid off. That's not our approach. This year, we're investing a record \$1.2 billion into our classrooms and 50 more teachers will be hired to reduce class sizes and give students the one-on-one attention they need to succeed.

We're getting back to basics with revised math and language arts curricula, and this budget invests an additional million dollars to make sure students have the fundamental reading, writing and math skills they need to succeed.

These investments are paying off. A decade ago, three out of every 10 high school students in Manitoba didn't graduate. Today, our graduation rate has improved to over 85 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, this means over 2,000 more students graduating from our schools today. More work is needed to continue this improvement and to make sure it happens in all our schools.

Schools on reserve continue to be funded at levels below off-reserve schools, and graduation rates lag far behind. This year, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) will lead a delegation of Aboriginal, business and post-secondary leaders to meet with First Nation students to find out what is working and how we can work together to build more bridges to higher learning and good jobs. Aboriginal youth are the fastest growing part of our population. We want and we need these students to succeed. The success of our economy depends on tackling this historic inequality.

Summer jobs are an important way for students to get real-world experience. Budget 2014 will invest in more Green Teams, over 1,400 jobs for young people this summer, a new summer skill trades camp to help students have fun while learning hands-on about a future career.

Grâce à leur qualité et à leur dynamisme, les universités et les collèges du Manitoba constituent un pôle d'attraction pour les jeunes. Notre gouvernement a contribué à la reconstruction de chaque campus postsecondaire de la province, donnant naissance à des immeubles insignes et à des installations réputées.

Translation

Strong and vibrant universities and colleges help make Manitoba an attractive place for young people. Our government has helped rebuild every post-secondary campus in this province, with signature buildings and renowned facilities.

English

We believe in an education system with no wrong doors and no dead ends. It should be easier for students to get credit when they transfer between programs and institutions. This session, new legislation will merge the Council on Post-Secondary Education into the Department of Education and Advanced Learning. This will smooth the paths between programs and between institutions and help institutions respond more quickly to labour market needs.

Universities and colleges, in partnership with entrepreneurs, play a key role in driving the innovation needed for a dynamic and growing economy. Our new innovation strategy will create the jobs of tomorrow right here in Manitoba by focusing on new investment and commercialization. We want to encourage new businesses to develop innovative ideas, and we want to work with existing

businesses who are thriving but can grow stronger and create more good jobs.

Starting with Budget 2014, we will establish Research Manitoba to target funding to strategic priorities under the guidance of researchers and entrepreneurs, and we will establish new young entrepreneurs technology grants to help young Manitobans with innovative business ideas pursue their dreams at home.

Growing an economy with one of Canada's lowest unemployment rates requires dedicated focus on growing the workforce. We've heard from businesses that finding skilled workers is the biggest obstacle to growth. Keeping more of our young people in Manitoba, helping Aboriginal youth succeed and increasing our immigration levels all support more people entering the job market.

There are others who face barriers to work who have been confined to the margins for too long. Our economy cannot afford to leave anybody on the sidelines. Helping people go back to work or get that first job will transform their lives and grow our workforce.

Last Friday I met with inspiring adult students at the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg. I talked with moms and dads who, for lots of reasons, didn't make it through high school. Some are working at low-wage jobs; some are on assistance. They are all working hard to make a better life for themselves and their families.

This budget launches Manitoba Works!, a new program with community agencies, to provide essential skills training and work experience to people who face many barriers to a good job. Mr. Speaker, nobody should be worse off when they leave welfare for work.

Budget 2014 introduces a new Manitoba rent assist benefit which will significantly increase housing support for people on social assistance and will move with them as they move into the workforce. Once fully implemented, rent support for those on social assistance will rise to 75 per cent of median market rent. Reducing poverty and helping people move from welfare to work is not just the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker, it's what our economy needs to grow.

Increasing rent support is only part of the solution. Manitobans need more affordable places to call home. This year we will expand our successful partnership with the City of Winnipeg, building more

downtown rental housing, and extend that approach to Brandon. Work will also continue with the Manitoba Metis Federation to develop more affordable housing.

* (15:10)

Budget 2014 will finish our current plan to develop 1,500 more affordable housing units and support 1,500 more social housing units. And this year, work will begin on an additional 1,000 social and affordable housing units over the next three years.

Raising the minimum wage bolsters our efforts to grow the labour market. Since 1999, our government has raised the minimum wage every single year, helping low-income earners and their families. The minimum wage will increase again in 2014.

Knowing your child is being well cared for is essential for a parent returning to work. Since 1999, our government has opened almost 150 new child-care centres. When I visited new centres in St. Vital and St. James, I met parents who had the comfort of knowing their children have exceptional places to learn and grow during the workday. Mr. Speaker, Budget 2014 adds more than 5 and a half million dollars for new child-care spaces and better funding for centres. In the coming weeks, we will launch a new multi-year plan that will build and expand more child-care centres, create thousands of new spaces and provide higher wages and additional training for more child-care professionals. We have heard from parents and early childhood educators, as well as teachers and school administrators, that creating stronger links between our child-care centres and our schools would help make life easier for working families. We are committed to strengthening those connections.

Mr. Speaker, making sure everyone can share in the prosperity of our province means believing in the potential of each person. This year, we will leverage existing partnerships with the community and with employers to establish a first-in-Manitoba, post-secondary program for persons with intellectual disabilities at Red River College. This will help increase our workforce and build on our historic new Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Manitoba's social enterprises such as BUILD and ImagineAbility have a proven track record of helping people who may have never held a job enter the workforce. This year, we will work with social enterprises to create a comprehensive strategy to grow the sector and create

more first jobs. We will also support community enterprises with an enhanced tax credit.

A young Manitoban entering the skilled trades today is not only pursuing a rewarding career, but also playing an important part in building our province, and building our province is vitally important today. The global economic recovery has been slower than anyone expected and remains fragile. If we don't act now to address outstanding infrastructure needs, our future as a strong and competitive economy will be threatened. By investing in infrastructure now, we will create good jobs, help young people start their careers here and put our economy on the right course. Mr. Speaker, Budget 2014 launches a historic 5-and-a-half-billion-dollar plan to build and renew our province's infrastructure.

Last year, the PST was raised by 1 cent on the dollar. Our new plan invests significantly more than the revenue raised by the new point of PST into core infrastructure, over and above our previous investment level. This decision is allowing us to strengthen our main trade routes and highways, build better flood protection and improve the municipal infrastructure needed for a growing province.

The federal government has also recognized the importance of infrastructure renewal in launching the new Building Canada plan, providing an opportunity for all levels of government to work together on our shared priorities.

At round-table meetings throughout the province, from Thompson to Dauphin to Brandon, we heard from Manitobans about their priorities for infrastructure investments. They told us that investing in core infrastructure will create jobs, expand trade and make our economy more competitive.

Mr. Speaker, Budget 2014 funds new paving on Highway 12 that are connecting families in Ste. Anne and Steinbach to the Trans-Canada and reconstruction of the Seine River Diversion bridge. And Budget 2014 moves ahead with plans for a new interchange on the north Perimeter at Highway 59, improving safety, easing congestion and adding a pedestrian overpass at one of Manitoba's busiest intersections.

Many of our investments support the further development of our inland port. CentrePort Canada offers access to air, road and rail transportation and industrial land. Already, more than 30 businesses are

establishing there. Manitoba is investing in extending waste water services to CentrePort, and we will work with the federal government and municipal partners to prioritize construction of a new water treatment plant for Headingley, CentrePort and surrounding communities.

This year we will implement new planning tools to streamline industrial development approvals in CentrePort. And we look forward to working with CentrePort on the development of a common-use rail facility.

Recently, Mr. Curwin Friesen told me about how disruptive the flooding of Highway 75 had been to his Altona printing business. Our plan to upgrade Highway 75 to interstate flood standards means he will be able to get his goods to southern customers without recurring disruption.

Fifty years ago, Premier Duff Roblin made a visionary but controversial decision to build the floodway to protect homes from flooding on the Red River. The floodway cost \$63 million to build and another \$665 million to expand, but has already prevented about \$30 billion in damages. Flood protection is a smart investment.

Our challenge today is to apply the lessons of the floodway to the new reality of more frequent and widespread flooding. Our five-year plan invests in building a new outlet and a permanent channel to ease pressures along Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin. We will also move ahead with rehabilitating and improving the Portage Diversion channel and upgrading control structures, as well as protecting more communities from flooding with permanent dikes.

We know that municipal governments cannot address infrastructure challenges alone; all levels of government need to come to the table. Manitobans expect nothing less. Growing communities depend on strong, local infrastructure like good roads and clean water.

Our five-year plan will invest \$250 million working with the City of Winnipeg to renew and upgrade Winnipeg roads. Major routes such as Pembina Highway, Route 90, roads around Polo Park and Lagimodière Boulevard will be significantly upgraded, along with many residential streets across the city.

The Province remains committed to working with other levels of government toward the building of the second phase of the rapid transit corridor.

In Brandon, we will partner to advance work on the reconstruction of the Daly Overpass and improving Victoria Avenue.

Over the next five years we will invest over \$75 million in municipal roads and bridges to ensure the province's many communities can continue to grow.

Clean water is a basic necessity. With growing populations and expanding businesses, many of Manitoba's municipalities must modernize and expand their water treatment—their waste water treatment facilities. Over the next five years the Manitoba government will work municipalities and the federal government to upgrade or replace waste water treatment facilities in communities like Portage la Prairie, Thompson, Selkirk and Virden. These investments will help protect the health of Lake Winnipeg and other waterways. These investments in core infrastructure are essential to our future prosperity; so, too, are investments in developing our abundant hydro resources.

Generations ago, Manitobans recognized the immense potential that hydroelectricity had to offer. Decades later we still enjoy the benefits of clean, renewable and affordable hydro; however, our growing economy and population mean we will run out of home-grown power in about a decade. It takes years to plan and build new dams; we need to build now to make sure the power will be there when new families and new businesses need it.

There are those who argue that we should squander our natural hydro advantage and turn instead to fossil fuels. Such an approach would create jobs in other provinces instead of Manitoba, and it would leave our ratepayers at the mercy of a volatile gas market. Developing hydro will create jobs here at home, and that's what we want.

Mr. Speaker, just last week Manitoba Hydro announced a major new power sale to Wisconsin, bringing our total signed export contract since 2010 to more than \$9 billion. With new generating capacity and with these export sales, we will meet the electricity needs of our growing economy and keep our rates affordable into the future.

Churchill is Manitoba's Arctic gateway. Legislation before this House will establish a new agency to drive investment, jobs and growth for the entire Hudson Bay region. Budget 2014 renews the First Peoples Economic Growth Fund, an important partnership with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

Investments from the fund have created almost 500 jobs and leveraged more than \$55 million in investment.

* (15:20)

This year we celebrate the international year for family farming. New initiatives will be put in place to promote Manitoba producers and Manitoba-grown food. Budget 2014 doubles funding for Partner 4 Growth, a successful collaboration with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities supporting community-led economic development in rural Manitoba. And, as our pork industry deals with new disease threats, we will continue to work with the Manitoba Pork Council and infected farms on rapid detection and biosecurity. In the coming session, new legislation will help us respond more quickly when disease emerges.

Budget 2014 creates green jobs by more than doubling our investment in biomass production. This year we will invest additional resources in provincial park improvements and put in place new supports to help protect Lake Winnipeg, and new bills will be introduced to reduce exposure to synthetic chemical lawn pesticides and to further protect our boreal and carbon-rich peat lands, providing significant climate change benefits. Protecting Manitoba's great outdoors and building on the many opportunities it offers will help make Manitoba an even more attractive place for families.

The last time Manitoba faced a recession medical school spaces were cut, nurses were fired, and wait-lists grew. The government of the day tried to privatize home care, introduced user fees, and let some people buy their way to the front of the line for surgery, a move that broke the law and cost Manitoba taxpayers over \$2 million in fines under the Canada Health Act. Despite the fact that it didn't work then, there are still those saying that American-style health care is a system we need.

Mr. Speaker, our government rejects these renewed calls for two-tier health care. We will protect universal public health care for Manitoba families to make sure it's there when they need it. Our record is clear. We've trained and hired more health-care professionals. There are now 3,500 more nurses and 500 more doctors in Manitoba than there were in 1999. We've upgraded over 100 health-care facilities. We've reduced wait times to give patients access to faster care while bringing more health services into rural communities, and we've reduced the number of regional health authorities and

reinvested savings to provide free cancer drugs. Budget 2014 will improve health care for Manitobans by making it easier to get a family doctor, by hiring more doctors and nurse practitioners, and opening new clinics like the new Access centre at Grace Hospital and new quick-care clinics in St. Vital and Seven Oaks.

Budget 2014 improves health care by building across rural Manitoba, including new clinics in Swan River and Steinbach, a redeveloped ER and new MRI in Dauphin, a new ambulance station in Ile-des-Chenes, new CancerCare hubs in the North, and a new mobile clinic to visit smaller communities in the south.

Manitobans deserve to feel safe at home and in their neighbourhoods. The City of Winnipeg's cadet program has been a tremendous success, and Budget 2014 includes resources to assist the City of Thompson to establish their own community safety officer program.

The murder of Phoenix Sinclair was horrific and has affected everyone who has heard the story of her short and brutal life. Over the last number of years we have put the child protection system on a path of supporting families before they are in crisis and making the protection of vulnerable children the highest priority. Today more social workers with more training and better tools are working to protect at-risk children. Commissioner Ted Hughes recently made recommendations to keep advancing early prevention efforts, including addressing the root causes of poverty and family breakdown. With major new investments in rent support, child care, and affordable housing, Budget 2014 acts on these fundamentals.

More and more people are choosing to make Manitoba their home because of our affordable quality of life. Manitoba is the most affordable place for families to live in Canada. When taxes and basic household costs are added together, an average family—Manitoba family—saves over \$5,400. In 2014 Manitoba families will once again enjoy the lowest rates in Canada on their electricity, home heating, and auto insurance bills, a guarantee protected in law and made possible by public ownership.

Every Manitoban knows about the hazards of winter driving, especially this year. Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Public Insurance will soon offer a new low-cost loan program to make it easier for families to purchase snow tires.

For most families, a home is the biggest purchase they will ever make. New legislation will protect consumers when they undertake home repairs and when they are buying or selling a home. New consumer protection rules will also protect families from misleading cable, Internet and cellphone promotions.

In Churchill, I met a woman who, like many Manitobans, volunteers her time to help her neighbours. She helps run the local food bank, and she told me of the struggles that northern families face. When one orange might cost almost \$2 and four litres of milk may cost more than \$10, feeding your children nutritious meals can mean impossible choices. Through the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative, we are supporting communities to produce healthy foods locally. This year we'll help make healthy foods, including milk, more affordable in Manitoba's most remote communities.

Our government has always looked for common sense ways to make life easier for families, starting the school year after Labour Day and matching up in-service dates across school divisions. This year we will launch a conversation with families on other ways to help them achieve a better work-life balance.

Tax reductions made by this government since 1999 will save Manitoba families and businesses more than a billion dollars in 2014. The average Manitoba family will save \$3,800 this year. Budget 2014 will mark the first year of our plan to eliminate school taxes for seniors by 2016. All senior homeowners will be able to apply for a school tax rebate of up to \$235 this year building on up to \$1,100 in education property tax credits already in place. This move will take an additional 7,200 seniors off the school tax rolls. We will do this fairly, ensuring that those who in luxury homes don't get a disproportionate advantage. As of 2014, our basic income tax exemption is increasing by another \$250. In the last four years, this exemption has been increased by \$1,000 benefiting every tax payer and taking 22,000 low-income Manitobans off the tax rolls.

Since 1999, we have gone from having the highest tax on small business to being the only province in Canada with no income tax on small business. Twelve thousand Manitoba businesses now pay no corporate income tax.

We believe that everyone who has earned a pension deserves to retire with dignity. We remain committed to a modest, phased-in, and fully funded

expansion of the Canada Pension Plan and will continue to work with other provinces towards this goal.

The continued economic downturn has put all governments in Canada, and indeed, around the world, under significant fiscal pressure. Manitoba faces additional pressures from the unexpected loss of a hundred million dollars in federal transfers due to the contested downward adjustment to Manitoba's population estimates.

Some have called for short-sighted cuts that hurt families and our economy. We are taking a balanced approach focused on jobs and growth. Since the onset of the global recession, our government has paid down a half billion dollars in debt from rainy day savings. Debt-servicing costs have been reduced to 6 cents on the dollar down from over 13 cents when this government took office. We are on track to return to balance in 2016, and this year's bottom line is projected to come in \$86 million better than budgeted.

Manitobans expect and deserve excellent public services, and they expect government to use their tax dollars wisely to ensure these services are delivered as efficiently as possible. We reject across-the-board cuts that might help the government's bottom line today but would hurt families well into the future. Ours is a balanced approach, one that seeks out efficiencies while reinvesting money saved into front-line services Manitobans count on. Since the global recession, we have taken action to save money and to deliver services more efficiently. We've reduced the civil service by 370, more than halfway towards our target of 600. We have merged liquor and lotteries corporations, saving almost \$5 million while reducing red tape for business. We have cut the number of regional health authorities from 13 to five, and we've amalgamated 48 municipalities into 23.

* (15:30)

This year we will build on these measures by freezing or reducing the budgets of nine departments, extending corporate spending caps to all RHAs, limiting core government spending growth to 2 per cent so that the cost of government doesn't grow more quickly than our economy and capping administrative spending by school divisions. These measures aren't enough.

Mr. Speaker, today, I have appointed Mr. Rob Despins of StandardAero to lead a new Lean Council

to give us advice on how to deliver excellent public services for the best value. Many businesses apply Lean principles to improve their productivity while also delivering better products and services to their customers.

This government shares those goals. Lean principles have been applied in our health-care system, where we have driven down drug costs and found ways to help nurses spend less time on paperwork and more time at the bedside. And whenever I talk to our civil servants, I am impressed with their dedication to excellence. Every day they look for ways to do a better job for the Manitobans they serve, and they have many ideas on how we can streamline processes within government. We want to hear those ideas directly and act on them.

Lean management isn't about asking the same people to do more with less, and it isn't about offering less to Manitobans. It is about finding ways to offer better services with better results by focusing on those parts of the job that really make a difference.

This year promises to be a remarkable year for showcasing the best of what Manitoba has to offer to the rest of Canada and the world. This week, youth from around our province are competing in the Manitoba Games, developing their skills and pursuing their athletic dreams. Later this month, Manitoba will have the honour of hosting the 2014 Juno Awards highlighting our second-to-none local music talent. This summer, the incredible transformation of Assiniboine Park into an even more popular place for families and tourists to enjoy will reach another important milestone with the opening of the world-class Journey to Churchill polar bear exhibit. And later this fall, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights will open—will open its doors as an interactive centre for preservation, learning and leadership on human rights, honouring the great dream of the late Izzy Asper. In this hundredth anniversary of World War I we remember the legacy of our veterans who sacrificed, laid the foundation for the freedom and prosperity we enjoy.

Manitobans can be proud of what has been accomplished over the past decade: improved schools, better highways and a health-care system that people know they can count on.

None of this has happened by accident. Manitoba families, businesses and government have pulled together to chart a course through these uncertain times, but there continue to be risks around

the corner. The global economy is not yet recovered, and there are renewed calls for reckless cuts that would stall economic recovery and throw people out of work. We will not risk our future by listening to these voices. We will create a Manitoba that our children will also be proud to choose to call home.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present Budget 2014, a budget that makes strategic investments to create good jobs and maintain our steady growth. Working together we will make sure Manitoba's future remains bright.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): I move, seconded by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Messages

Ms. Howard: I have two messages from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, as well as the budget documents including the statement summarizing the poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy which I would like to table.

Mr. Speaker: Please stand for the reading of the messages.

To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Lieutenant Governor transmits to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Estimates of sums required for the services of the province for the fiscal ending the 31st day of March, 2015, and recommends these Estimates to the Legislative Assembly. Signed by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

And, to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Lieutenant Governor transmits to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Estimates of sums required for the services of the province for capital expenditures, and recommends these Estimates to the Legislative Assembly. Signed by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Please be seated.

* * *

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby), that this House be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: This House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 6, 2014

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