

**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**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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
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EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
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GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
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WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, March 14, 2014

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Mr. Speaker:** Introduction of bills?

### PETITIONS

**Mr. Speaker:** We'll move on to petitions.

#### Beausejour District Hospital— Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The Beausejour District Hospital is a 30-bed, acute-care facility that serves the communities of Beausejour and Brokenhead.

(2) The hospital and the primary-care centre have had no doctor available on weekends and holidays for many months, jeopardizing the health and livelihoods of those in the North Eastman region of the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority.

(3) During the 2011 election, the provincial government promised to provide every Manitoban with access to a family doctor by 2015.

(4) This promise is far from being realized, and Manitobans are witnessing many emergency rooms limiting services or closing temporarily, with the majority of these reductions taking place in rural Manitoba.

(5) According to the Health Council of Canada, only 25 per cent of doctors in Manitoba reported that their patients had access to care on evenings and weekends.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Health to ensure that the Beausejour District Hospital and primary-care centre have a primary-care physician available on weekends and holidays to better provide area residents with this essential service.

This petition is signed by J. Delaney, D. Mukherjee, R. Bass and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

Further petitions?

#### Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by M. Bebek, A. Pateman, R. Arjoon and many, many other fine Manitobans.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further petitions? Seeing none, we'll move on to committee reports. Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Tammy Gudmundson from St. Andrews, who is the guest of the honourable Minister of Housing and Community Development (Mr. Bjornson).

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### NDP Employment Numbers Job Creation

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, in his budget address, the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) admitted that his government inflated their infrastructure job numbers by 80 per cent. He said, and I quote: I know it's only 11,500 jobs that we're creating here. End quote. A far cry from the almost 60,000 that the minister has suggested.

Many people have questioned the NDP math here. Now even their own members are indicating a discrepancy.

How can Manitobans trust this NDP government to manage anything when even their own members are starting to question their numbers?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy):** You know, my birthday is still about six weeks away, but it really does feel like it's today when we get to, you know, have yet another day when we can talk about our \$5.5-billion *[inaudible]* on infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, where we're not only going to see a boost to our economy to the tune of \$1.16 for every dollar that we invest, what we're going to have, according to the Conference Board of Canada and, indeed, reiterated in the statements again yesterday by the Conference Board, an increase of 58,900 jobs over five years. That's 11,000-some per year on average.

I know that her leader got a copy of this email yesterday. I—it would seem he didn't have an opportunity to share that with her, so, Mr. Speaker, I'll table it for her today.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has no credibility when it comes to their job commitment.

They broke their promise not to raise the PST and they raised the PST. They broke their promise and gutted the balanced budget legislation.

How can anyone believe that they will follow through with this latest job creation commitment?

**Ms. Oswald:** Again, still squarely in our message box, I find the member opposite talking about our job creation, 11,000 jobs on average per year with this investment of \$5.5 billion.

Mr. Speaker, we know that really excellent people across Manitoba, industry leaders and community leaders, told us to invest in that core infrastructure that's going to help drive our economy going forward.

I listened to her leader yesterday tauntingly saying that nobody refers to person-years of experience as jobs. Twenty-two seconds later, we found a news release with him in it, Mr. Speaker, along with the government of Canada, along with the government of Ontario. Jobs, jobs, jobs.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, another year, another five-year NDP government plan. This budget is nothing more than a document full of future NDP broken promises.

They broke their promise; they raised the PST. They broke their promise and they gutted the balanced budget legislation. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, what their annual five-year plan will look like next year.

How can anyone believe that they will follow through on the latest job creation commitment?

**Ms. Oswald:** When her leader was in the hallway sputtering and bumbling in response to the fact that he himself had used this very example of jobs instead of person-years of experience, Mr. Speaker, what was his plan? His plan was to endeavour to pivot and say, well, we would actually like to see the analytics on what it would be for jobs if we did nothing, which, by the way, is their plan.

\*(10:10)

#### Income Tax Rates Impact on Manitobans

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Mr. Speaker, after 14 years at the helm, this NDP government tables a new budget—they table a new budget that shows that the more they say they're on track, the more they are going off the rails.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans continue to pay more income tax than any of our neighbouring provinces. The average family of four earning \$60,000 pays 1,500 more dollars than BC, twice as much as Alberta, \$3,000 more than Saskatchewan, five times as much as Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, why do Manitobans have to pay more income tax because of this spend government?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance):** What? Not another question about jobs? You don't want to debate whether it's 12,000 jobs a year or 50,000 jobs over five years? That's—we've just totally dropped that? Okay. We can talk about taxes, Mr. Speaker.

If this member is so concerned about taxes, when he gets the opportunity he should ask his leader why, when his leader was in government, he thought it was okay to charge Manitoba families and businesses a billion dollars more in taxes than they pay today. He should ask for that answer.

**Mr. Friesen:** Well, it's obvious that this Finance Minister is going to try to steer very carefully around any question around income tax because she knows that Manitobans pay as much income tax as BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan combined.

At a time of record low interest rates, at a time of record federal transfers, at a time of record government revenue growth, they still can't reduce the burden on Manitoba families for income tax. So, Mr. Speaker, in 2013 they collected \$150 million more in income tax, and the same they're projecting now, \$150 million more in income tax than last year.

Why does this—when is this NDP government going to learn to manage its spending, just like Manitoba families have to manage theirs?

**Ms. Howard:** When somebody gets a job, they start to pay income tax. And there are—and let's look at where families are at in terms of income taxes. I take the member's—I take the member at his word; we, too, know that families need every dollar that they make, and we're very cautious when we spend their money.

But a family of four with two earners and a \$76,000 income this year will save \$1,700 in taxes because of the tax cuts that have come into place since 1999. A family of four with two people earning who makes \$100,000 in income will save \$2,307 this year because of tax cuts that have come into place

since 1999. A senior couple with \$40,000 in income will pay \$1,060 less—

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

**Mr. Friesen:** Mr. Speaker, they don't raise the basic personal exemption. They don't index tax rates. They're like a giant vacuum sucking resources from Manitobans all the time.

This minister wants to talk about affordability. Let's talk about affordability: hydro rates up, MPI rates up, tax on new home insurance policies—oh, and I forgot, an 8 per cent PST on everything you buy.

Mr. Speaker, why does Saskatchewan's budget say that a family of four making \$75,000 a year—Saskatchewan families are ahead by \$1,300? What's the difference between our numbers and theirs? Oh, I forgot, they can balance their budget, just like Manitoba families.

What's wrong with them?

**Ms. Howard:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite may want to read the auditor general's report in Saskatchewan which says very clearly that, by the same accounting principles that we use in Manitoba, that they are not balanced; their budget has not balanced. In fact, in the year that the auditor looked at their budget, they found that their deficit in Saskatchewan was actually \$10 million greater than the deficit here using the same rules. So I don't mind comparisons, but we should compare apples to apples. And if they—and if the member opposite wants to refer to that auditor general's report in Saskatchewan, he's free to do that.

But this is the truth, Mr. Speaker. Since we became government, we have decreased income taxes. We have increased the basic personal exemption. We've increased what you're able to get in terms of property tax credits. When we came into government, you could get a \$250 property tax credit. Today that's \$700. For some people on low incomes it's \$1,100, and very soon we will announce more property tax relief for seniors. That's what we've done in government.

Under their government, people, businesses, families, seniors, everyone—

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

**Flooding 2011  
Constituent Concern (Fred Neil)**

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Speaker, Fred Neil is my constituent who has—of mine who has been struggling to keep his farm afloat since the 2011 flood. Mr. Neil lost 143 cows and suffered a loss of over a million dollars that resulted from the 2011 flood, yet the government has done little to help him. People like Mr. Neil is the backbone of our province and our economy.

Why is it that the NDP government has abandoned him and his employees to fend for themselves?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the question for the member, certainly welcome him to the Manitoba Legislature.

I do want to indicate that during the 2011 flood we put in place extensive response both in terms of flood fighting and also in terms of disaster financial assistance. I want to indicate that this covered lost property, and there was extensive coverage in and around the member's constituency. I do know that some of the kind of programming that was put in place in the past were—certainly, the federal government cost-shared in '97. Lost income were not put in place. In fact, we had to put in place probably in excess of \$600 million worth of stand-alone provincial programs.

So I do appreciate that there are some losses that weren't covered and some—

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

**Mr. Piwniuk:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP has been good at talking but not good at taking action.

Mr. Neil needs help now. Jobs are going to be lost in my community. Mr. Neil is out over a million dollars, yet the government has not—only reimbursed him for only less than 10 per cent of the total.

Will the government do the right thing and help Mr. Neil and those in similar situations, or will they be keeping—keep abandoning him and his employees to fend for themselves?

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate again that disaster financial assistance deals with damage to property, and certainly any Manitoban that was impacted by the flood in 2011 was eligible for that kind of coverage. I do want to stress again that there

was a precedent in 1997 with the federal government of the day with the JERI program.

And I don't mean this in a partisan sense, there might be an opportunity, he might want to call his MP, a former MLA who might have a sense of this, because we have indicated that we're always open to working with the federal government. I want to stress in 2011 we had to put in place nine stand-alone provincial programs, none of which were cost-shared by the federal government.

So we have been there, Mr. Speaker, but we're—we'd be more than happy to work with the member and with the new MP for the area. I'm sure the member could probably place a phone call to ask for—

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

**Mr. Piwniuk:** Mr. Speaker, it's tough to believe anything that comes out of the mouths of the members of opposite given that their ongoing trouble to tell the truth.

The situation is clear. Mr. Neil can't afford to wait any longer. The banks are knocking on his door. The NDP spin won't pay the bills and the NDP spin won't save the people's jobs.

Mr. Speaker, why wouldn't the NDP do the right thing and help Mr. Neil instead of leaving him and his employees to fend for themselves?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to stress again there was a precedent in 1997 where the federal government of the day—actually, I think it was the Chrétien government—put in place assistance that dealt with lost income. Any time we raised, during 2011, in any of our discussions with the federal government, they made it very clear that they would cover infrastructure in terms of 50 per cent and disaster financial assistance which deals with damage to property. There was never any indication from the federal government they would not only cover these kind of losses, but the nine stand-alone provincial programs we put in place, not one of them has 1 cent of federal dollars.

So in all seriousness, I say to the member opposite—and I appreciate his concern; I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, he is very concerned about the situation—it would be, I think, helpful if perhaps he placed a call to the Member of Parliament for the area. He would certainly know this situation, because we—

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

\* (10:20)

### **Moose Population Monitoring Sustainability Measures**

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, one of the key components of conservation is that of sustainability, the managing of our resources today for continued use tomorrow. To properly ensure those resources, we must have accurate measurements.

The NDP, for several years, funnelled dollars earmarked for moose population monitoring into general revenues.

With a government estimating a provincial moose population of 30,000, a number continually called into question by those with boots on the ground, can the minister advise when he anticipates sharing the results of aerial surveying of game hunting areas 19 and 19A in the western part of Manitoba?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship):** Well, first, I look forward to talking about, especially, the new Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund, but, Mr. Speaker, I, first of all, just want to welcome the member, actually, welcome him back to this building. I know he's particularly welcomed by members opposite who pine for the '90s, and I'm sure he's going to help out.

I also just wanted to, perhaps, wanted to just urge the new critic as well. I noticed that the last critic, after he left this House and got off the—away from the yoke of the Leader of the Opposition, he put out this statement: Meet Larry Maguire; this year, farmers across our region saw record-breaking crops; new jobs are being created in our natural resource sector; new homes are going up in city and town alike.

Perhaps he wants to start right from the get-go by recognizing the steady positive growth brought in by this government.

**Mr. Martin:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP allocate more to themselves through the vote tax than on moose recovery.

Mr. Speaker, does this minister have a rapid-response mechanism in place should the results show

a significant decline, and is he prepared to table that plan today?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** That was an effort at a rapid response, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to remind the member that, for the first time in Manitoba history, and despite no interest from members opposite when they had a chance at it, we have now just put into law a new Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund, and that is to build on the historical efforts to protect moose populations, and that is to empower those who hunt, those who are on the land, is to recognize that they have particular knowledge and expertise and insights that should go into work to enhance our moose populations.

I want the member opposite to stand up and say thumbs up. I'm waiting for him to say thumbs up to the Headingley bypass, by the way. We haven't heard from him.

**Mr. Martin:** Mr. Speaker, moose hunting is an important part of our economy and the lives of First Nations and Metis.

What is this minister prepared to do to ensure harvesting is sustainable and based on accurate measurements?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, if members opposite were all of a sudden, you know, interested in some new-found way in sustainable populations, perhaps he might want to support the government's green plan. I haven't heard boo from them.

In fact, though, I'm thrilled today. I—you know, maybe the Maytag guy can get a call once in a while. Maybe with the new critic, I can get a wake-up call in here. I used to come in here with a big thick binder ready for all the questions. Look how skinny this is now. I just can't give up on it. I know they're going to have some interest.

But, Mr. Speaker, moose populations are a priority for us. That's why we've been closing roads. That's why we've been doing surveys. That's why we've been doing closures. And we're seeing some success. There is more to come.

### **STARS Helicopter Services Wheeler Contract**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, seems there's a lot of hot air in the House today coming from the other side.

Mr. Speaker, on something very serious, I've been looking through a number of freedom of information documents about STARS, and I have some questions about discrepancies that I am seeing.

The contract with Dr. Wheeler said that the agreement came into effect on November 1st, 2013. But in Dr. Wheeler's final report, he said that the government didn't request his services until late November of 2013.

Can the Minister of Health explain this discrepancy?

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me just say how glad I am that STARS is back up in the air. I know how important it is that it's back for scene calls. I know how important it is for Manitoba families, particularly for rural Manitoba. We know that they flew a mission yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

We know that patient safety, to Manitoba families, to medical professionals and, of course, to STARS, is the most important thing. We know that the clinical oversight under the leadership of Dr. Brian Postl will follow through recommendations on the report and, of course, guide us to the full resumption of service of STARS, which we know Manitoba families are counting on, Mr. Speaker.

We know that STARS is committed to making this happen. They have said publicly they're committed to any changes that we need to ensure that we high—that we have the highest quality patient care, because, of course, priority of patient care is a—

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

**Mrs. Driedger:** Well, it seems the Minister of Health can't seem to answer questions that come out of the blue. She can only read from her notes that are prepared by her spinners. She did not answer the question.

So, Mr. Speaker, the contract for Dr. Wheeler started on November 1st and was valued at \$47,000. Dr. Wheeler said he started late November and he wasn't asked to sign the contract until December 17th, a month and a half after the contract started. The Minister of Health has not even—or signed the contract herself. This seems like a very, very sloppy way to do business in a big department like that.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to tell us: Was this contract written after Dr. Wheeler had already done most of his report?

**Ms. Selby:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I can see the member is really focusing on patient safety and making sure that Manitobans around the province have the health care that they need.

Mr. Speaker, we know how important STARS is to Manitoba families. We are so happy to see that it's back up for scene calls. And we know that, particularly, rural Manitobans focus—are particularly important to rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, STARS is on board with patient safety. Manitoba Health is on board with patient safety. Our medical experts are on board with patient safety. The only one who is not putting patient safety first is the Conservative Health critic.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, the only one that is so full of rhetoric that does not understand how to answer these questions is the Minister of Health, and I would ask her to focus.

Mr. Speaker, part of the contract included a pledge to protect patient privacy, yet the Minister of Health didn't get Dr. Wheeler to sign this confidentiality pledge until December 17th, well after he had access to all of the patient information.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have to ask this Minister of Health. While patient safety is important, so is competent management of a department.

I have to ask the Minister of Health: Why the incompetence in handling a legal agreement in her department?

**Ms. Selby:** Mr. Speaker, Manitoba families are glad to know that STARS is back up in the air for those important scened service emergency measures that they can provide. We know that STARS was able to go up yesterday in one of those incidences where an ambulance may just not be able to reach someone.

Mr. Speaker, we have a Clinical Oversight Panel in place. We've got Dr. Postl in charge of that, following through on all the recommendations of the report and guiding STARS back into full service that we know that Manitobans depend on.

Mr. Speaker, our medical professionals are focused on patient safety. STARS is focused on patient safety. We're following the recommendations of the Wheeler report. I don't understand why this critic isn't focused on patient safety.

### Health-Care Services Government Record

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** In 1999 the NDP government promised to end hallway medicine in six months. What a joke, Mr. Speaker, but the joke was on Manitobans who believed the NDP and are still lining hospital hallways today. Not only do we have hallway medicine, we have highway medicine, we have parking lot medicine and now taxicab medicine.

This NDP government will lie and say anything to Manitobans just to get elected.

Mr. Speaker, how can Manitobans believe anything they say?

\* (10:30)

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health):** Well, let me see, Mr. Speaker. When they were in charge—the Leader of the Opposition, of course, was a senior member of the Filmon government, and this is what they did when they were in charge.

Mr. Speaker, they fired a thousand nurses. They cut 15 medical school spaces and they lost 116 doctors; in fact, in one year they made a record of losing more doctors than we've ever seen. They cancelled all health construction. They cancelled renovation and expansion. They closed an ER in Winnipeg permanently and four more community hospitals in Winnipeg overnight. They also cut \$37 million from rural hospitals and personal-care homes. They introduced home-care user fees, they cut home-care services that families rely on and, of course, we know they experimented with privatization.

### Tax Increases Government Record

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** But this is a government that started the lies in 1999 and continue to deceive and mislead Manitobans today.

The Premier (Mr. Selinger) stood up in 2011 and said, read my lips, no new taxes. Well, Mr. Speaker, what did they do? They've perpetrated the largest tax increase on Manitobans in the history of the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier—pardon me, I take that back. The NDP government lied to Manitobans in 2011. Again, they will lie and say anything to get elected.

How can Manitobans believe anything they say?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I had thought that the members opposite didn't want to hear about the '90s, but we can go there. That's fine.

The member who asks this question sat at the Cabinet table with a government that perpetrated the largest electoral fraud in our province's history, the darkest chapter in this province's democratic history, when they used senior civil servants, secretary to the Treasury Board, to make a secret payment to a phony political party to steal the votes of Aboriginal people. That is what the government that she was part of was all about.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** In 2014 what Manitoba families want is a government, Mr. Speaker, that tells the truth.

Manitoba parents teach their children not to lie. It's not appropriate to lie, but what this government does election after election is lie and say anything to get elected. The NDP lied to Manitobans in 2011 when they said they weren't going to raise taxes and then they did.

Mr. Speaker, how can Manitoba families believe a word that this government says when they lie year after year? How can they believe—

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

**Ms. Howard:** You know, I see the member wanted to drop any reference to the '90s very quickly after I reminded her of what really is the most shameful part of our democratic history in this province.

And I only want to quote from the judge that did an inquiry into that, Justice Alfred Monnin, who said in reference to that government, in reference to the people that were involved in that vote-rigging scandal, he said, I had never seen so many liars.

### Child Care and Early Childhood Education Funding (Budget 2014)

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, last year the government set a budget for core government expenditures of 12 billion and 99 million dollars. In her recent budget, the Finance Minister and her government show that they will come in at \$130 million over budget for these expenditures.

This has become a pattern for this NDP government of overexpending.

I ask the Finance Minister if she can explain to Manitobans why her government consistently spends more than budgeted on core government activities.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance):** I will refer the member to the third-quarter report, and it shows that in the expenditures for the last quarter, a hundred million dollars of that is set aside in order to provide for flood settlements with First Nations people. That is what that money is for.

And if the member opposite thinks that that was a bad decision, that we shouldn't set aside that money for flood victims, he's free to say that.

**Mr. Gerrard:** The Finance Minister should have put the contingency aside at the beginning of the year so she wouldn't have had this problem of overexpenditure, overexpenditure and overexpenditure.

Cumulatively since 1999 the NDP have racked up almost \$3 billion in overexpenditures. If the NDP government had not overspent on so many items in so many budgets, they would have had more than enough funds to adequately address the current crisis in child care and early childhood education in our province.

I ask the government why they have so poorly managed the province's finances that they've shortchanged mothers, fathers and children who desperately need access to early childhood education and child care.

**Ms. Howard:** So, essentially, what the member is asking me, why are you spending so much money when you should be spending more money? That is what he's just essentially asked, but I will tell the member opposite, in this budget there's 5 and a half million dollars for child care. That was an announcement that has been greeted with enthusiasm by those in the child-care field.

And even when there was the greatest recession going on since the Great Depression, even when things were challenging here in the province, we kept that commitment to child-care centres. We didn't do what members opposite did. We didn't cut those centres. We didn't stall the building of those centres. We continued to invest in child care because we know that it's an economic necessity and important for our children.

We're making progress towards a balanced budget. We're doing better each year and we'll continue to make that progress, but we'll do it in a

responsible way, and that means that we will not take the advice of members—

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

The honourable member for River Heights, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, you know, the problem is that this government has overspent so much in so many areas that they don't have the adequate funds in this budget to address what is a real and desperate child-care crisis in this province, and they budgeted for a thousand spaces when we need 10,000.

This is really hopelessly inadequate when we've got so many single parents, so many two parents who are both working who need the child care, and this is a big problem. This government has hardly touched the surface of the crisis that exists.

I ask the Finance Minister: Why wasn't she thinking about mothers and fathers and children in our province when she made her budget? Why did she shortchange mothers, fathers and children by underfunding child care and early childhood education?

**Ms. Howard:** Well, we will see soon, Mr. Speaker, where the member opposite's allegiance lies when he votes on this budget.

He can decide if he wants to stand with funding child care, adding 5 and a half million dollars to that budget, increasing the amount that the most vulnerable people in our society have in order to afford decent housing. He can decide if he wants to vote with a budget that invests in skills training, that invests in job creation to create economic success, or he can stand with the members opposite who have very clearly laid out what their plan is, to cut deeply into the services that matter to families, to lay off and fire people, to return the province to recession, to go back down the path that didn't work in the '90s.

He will soon be able to decide whose side he is on.

#### **Pan Am Concussion Program Youth Treatment Facility**

**Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert):** All our parents—all parents in this province want our children to lead healthy, active lives, but we know that injuries do happen when they're playing hockey or football or on the playground. When my son suffered

a concussion, he received excellent medical treatment, but we're going to take it one step further.

Yesterday the Premier (Mr. Selinger), the Minister of Health and the owner of the Winnipeg Jets, Mark Chipman, announced a new concussion clinic for youth to be opened at the MTS Iceplex.

Can the Minister of Health please inform the House on the investments that we are making in Manitoba to develop us as a leader in concussion injury research in North America?

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health):** I thank the member for the question.

I was pleased to stand with the Premier, the MLA for Assiniboia, Mark Chipman, Dr. Wayne Hildahl, Dr. Mike Ellis, Buck Pierce from the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and Mark Scheifele from the Winnipeg Jets to announce a world-class concussion clinic for young people here in Manitoba. Both Buck and Mark know how important this is and the effects of a concussion and how serious it can be and how—the difference of getting a proper diagnosis and treatment early on is.

This new program is expected to see as many as 30 patients under the age of 18 every week, but, of course, research the program will be doing will help all Manitobans and people around the world. Care will be provided by a team of experts who are at the forefront of concussion research.

In fact, Dr. Ellis is one of the more than 560 doctors we've recruited to Manitoba since we've been in office—

\* (10:40)

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

#### **Youth Mental Health Services Case Concern**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** On March 11th the Minister of Healthy Living and the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby) received a hand-delivered letter asking for her immediate attention to address the government's denial of mental health treatment for a very seriously ill eight-year-old girl. We now know that Ryleigh will have a minimum of two-month wait period to see a specialist before a treatment plan is even developed.

Dr. Murray Enns, the WRHA's medical director for mental health, has said the reality is a very large quantity of mental health care is being provided by

family doctors, and if it wasn't the psychiatrists would even be more alarmingly swamped than they are.

We're seeing that Ryleigh is not receiving treatment because this minister and this government failed to work on their five-year plan. This minister has failed. This NDP government has lied.

When will they ensure patient safety and care for families that feel abandoned?

**Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors within the Department of Health):** I'd like to thank the member for the question.

And, yes, I would again remind the member that in the Chamber here we do not discuss the particulars of an individual's case. And I did extend to the member, out of concern for her constituent, the opportunity to meet with me, and it's unfortunate that she has yet to take up that opportunity.

Because I can actually tell the member that, actually, someone from our office was in contact with Ryleigh's mother as soon as we received the email, that the Prairie Mountain regional health authority has been in contact with the family and that, as of March 13th, the program manager in Brandon has contacted the family. And the issue, according to the family, is currently resolved.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Mr. Speaker, I've been speaking to the family this morning and the situation is not resolved. This family has been treated verily poorly by this minister and her staff. This minister has played politics with this situation.

The government in 2011 introduced a program called Rising to the Challenge. Four years into this program there are no services being available for this young child. She's been turned away by a treatment facility because this government lied to the families, and they now feel abandoned.

And this government has done nothing but use rhetoric and political spin to try to address this. They failed Ryleigh—

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

**Ms. Blady:** Mr. Speaker, and, again, while I appreciate the member opposite's passion for the situation, again, I find it disappointing that when she was afforded the opportunity to meet with me to discuss this, she has yet to meet with me. She has not taken up that opportunity, and had she wanted resolution to

the situation and wanted full information—so I believe that if the member was as passionate and honest about the situation, rather than making allegations of game playing, maybe she would stop playing games with this child in this House.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Ryleigh is an eight-year-old, seriously ill child. When I received the email, I hand-delivered a letter to the minister. She was not available. We hand-delivered the letter to the minister. We had a very serious issue. It's not resolved.

This government has had four years and a five-year mental health plan to collectively deal with a partnership, a collaborative effort, to deal with situations like this. They have failed. Children are being turned away from the child and youth treatment facility in Brandon because this government cannot get its act together.

Mr. Speaker, how many children have to die before this government and this minister actually take action? She needs to take action. She doesn't need me to hold her hand—

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

**Ms. Blady:** Mr. Speaker, again, the impacts that mental health issues and the needs of children have can be devastating on families, and I can assure this Chamber that my staff and I have been very co-operative and collaborative in dealing with this and many other issues.

I pride ourselves on the fact that in developing the mental health strategy, Rising to the Challenge, that we have made significant achievements. We have done things like host the national mental health summit to bring together experts to share our best ideas. We have partnered with professionals that the care and the treatment of individuals who have lived experience is a priority and it has been managed. And it—we do our utmost so that no door is the wrong door for those seeking treatment. We have—

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

#### **PST Increase Impact on Families**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz):** Mr. Speaker, the expansion of 14 per cent on the PST includes bedding, pillows, baby-bottle warmers, nursing pads, diaper bags, diaper pails and liners, baby blankets and crib sheets.

Does the spenDP not think the PST increases will have a significant impact on the disposable income of young families? Or do they simply not think?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, in this budget we see many investments that are going to make lives a little bit easier, a little bit better for families: investments in child care, investments in training and skills so that young families can get the education that they need in order to make a better living for themselves.

We also see in this budget investments to ensure that the most vulnerable people in our society have a little bit more money so they can get a safer place to live.

This is in stark contrast to what the members opposite did when they were in government when they clawed back every cent of the National Child Benefit to those families who needed it the most, Mr. Speaker. That is a shameful record and they have every right to be ashamed of it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for oral questions has expired.

#### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

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

#### **Branson Gudmundson**

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Housing and Community Development):** Mr. Speaker, in honour of Manitoba's Year of Music, declared by the Premier (Mr. Selinger), I would like to recognize a talented young individual by the name of Branson Gudmundson from St. Andrews. This young man recently hit it big by signing a record deal with Los Angeles-based Bananabeat Records, and he's only 15.

Branson is the epitome of what young people can achieve if they are committed to their dreams. Young people have enormous talent and resilience, which only develops if they have the support of caring adults such as this young man's mother, Tammy Gudmundson, who is here with us today. As a parent of children who take music lessons and musical theatre, I know first-hand the pride a parent feels at each and every show.

Mr. Speaker, at only the infancy stages of his career, Branson Gudmundson, or Goody, has already achieved a great deal. He began his musical aspirations at age four, when he started playing piano and guitar, maximizing his talents and skills. His

passion for music later evolved into a love of hip hop. At age 12, he began writing, producing and recording his own music under the alias Goody, his childhood nickname.

Mr. Speaker, Goody's original intent was to make music for his friends and peers, but as his homemade music videos spread, he became a YouTube sensation. After his video, *Dreams*, went viral, he was entered by local Winnipeg DJ Ace Burpee into a songwriting competition. With his raw talent and emcee skills, Goody emerged as the champion and represented Winnipeg at the national finals in Toronto.

Mr. Speaker, since then, not only has he been signed, but he has received rock-star treatment. He was chosen to go on tour with musical duo Capital Cities, and got to meet rap legend, The Game, in Los Angeles.

What makes this young man even more accomplished is his dedication to his studies. While going down this new path in life, he is still committed to attending class at Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School as much as possible. And even though he's hit it big in the music industry, he's still hitting the books between the recording sessions.

Mr. Speaker, we have every reason to be proud of Branson Gudmundson, and we wish him and his family well in his future musical career.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **La Salle Credit Union Complex**

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, on February 8th, my home community of La Salle celebrated the grand opening of the La Salle Credit Union Complex, an 18,000-square-foot facility containing a full-sized gym, multi-purpose room, fitness centre, outdoor rink and meeting rooms.

Five years ago, Mr. Speaker, a group of individuals had a vision. After countless meetings and an unimaginable number hours dedicated to making this project a success, Dave Brown, Gary Romijn, James Pollard, Brian Cornelson and Gerry Gluska, along with many others who supported, encouraged and assisted in various capacities, are to be congratulated.

\* (10:50)

The \$3.5-million facility is not only clean, bright and airy, but also power smart. At the grand opening,

Brian Rempel of Manitoba Hydro presented La Salle Community Centre board president James Pollard with a plaque, recognizing the building as meeting Hydro's Power Smart criteria for new buildings.

The complex was designed to save at least one third of the average energy costs of a similar building constructed using standard building code materials. It includes features such as high levels of roof, wall and floor insulation, a heat-recovery ventilation system, high-efficiency condensing hot water heater, fluorescent light fixtures, occupancy controls and low-flow plumbing features. With these features, Hydro estimates that the facility will save an average of \$2,400 a year on its annual heating, cooling and lighting bill, the equivalent of taking 12 vehicles off the road per year.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that the board has been actively working on meeting its other fundraising goal of \$800,000 to pay for equipment, furnishing, alarm system, sound system and parking lot improvements. To date, approximately \$600,000 has been raised, a hundred thousand coming from the main corporate sponsor, the La Salle Credit Union, for which the complex has been named.

Mr. Speaker, it was my sincere pleasure to attend and speak at the grand opening, not only as my first official event as the MLA for Morris but also as a board member who saw first-hand the efforts of everyone involved in seeing this dream come to conclusion.

#### **James Armstrong Richardson International Airport**

**Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James):** Praise for the incredible design of the new terminal at James Armstrong international airport continues to come in. Within a year of opening its airy all-glass atrium to the world, CBC News deemed it one of the top 10 airports in the world, and the Travel Channel considered it one of the world's most iconic airports.

The most recent accolade the airport received was being named one of the top 10 most stylish airports in the world by Fodor's Travel. This title puts the James Armstrong international airport in the same class as some of the world's most famous airports, including Los Angeles international and Copenhagen international airport.

The airport was designed by renowned architect César Pelli and welcomes passengers to Winnipeg with magnificent floor-to-ceiling windows and

glowing skylights. They fill the terminal with light and bring the expansive prairie sky indoors.

By combining sophisticated design and a keen focus on sustainability, James Armstrong international was also the first LEED-certified terminal in Canada. Its projected energy savings are equivalent to the energy consumption of 2,000 Canadian households, and an emissions reduction comparable to removing 1,500 cars from the road.

In addition to its feats in design and sustainability, the Winnipeg Richardson international airport is a key economic driver for Manitoba. It is the No. 1 dedicated freighter airport in Canada, generates over \$3.6 billion in economic output and welcomes over 3.5 million passengers annually. The Winnipeg Airports Authority, who manages airport operations, was recently named one of Manitoba's top 25 employers for 2014, their third consecutive title.

Mr. Speaker, whether you are travelling to far-off lands or just beginning your journey in Manitoba, the James Armstrong international airport is what connects our province to the world, and the impressions it leaves are lasting. I would like to congratulate the architects, construction workers—which happens to include the daughter of the MLA for St. Vital—and Winnipeg Airports Authority president Barry Rempel on the incredible success that they have had.

Thank you very much.

#### **Oak Park High School Cheerleading Team**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** I rise today to congratulate the Oak Park High School cheerleading team on their bronze medal wins at an international cheerleading competition. They won this bronze medal at the World School Cheerleading Championships in Orlando, Florida. This elite cheerleading event is by invitation only, so to even be asked to compete was a huge honour for these young ladies.

Twenty-three cheerleaders from Oak Park travelled to Orlando in February to compete against 600 teams from 20 different countries. Their coach, Charwin Dahl, was very proud of the girls as they had never competed at such a high level as this before. In fact, this was the first time that any team from Manitoba had competed at the worlds, quite an achievement for this group. When they found out that they would be attending this event, they didn't have a lot of time to rehearse their routine. However,

in that short time, they did a lot of research and preparation.

Oak Park's cheerleading team has won three provincial titles over the past four years, and in June their accomplishments were recognized by a private member's statement that I made at that time.

Cheerleading originated in the United States and remains predominantly American, with an estimated 1.5 million participants in an all-star cheerleading. The presentation of cheerleading as a sport to a global audience was led by the 1997 start of broadcasts of cheerleading competition by ESPN International and the worldwide release of the 2000 film *Bring It On*. Due in part to this recent exposure, there are now an estimated a hundred thousand participants scattered around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the coaches, cheerleaders and families for this wonderful achievement. This is such an important age to teach young girls the value of teamwork and dedication to an activity that encourages physical activity. Congratulations, also, to the administrators in the school who support this activity and encourage excellence in its pursuit.

And, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I ask leave of the House to have the names of the students included in Hansard.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to include the names in the Hansard of today? [*Agreed*]

*Alanda VanVliet, Allison Zajac, Ashleigh Williams, Breanne Zaleski, Brooke Krost, Caryl Teja, Cassidy Fitzhenry, Chelsea Arnaud, Cristina Gregory, Danae Kaita, Ellen Maycher, Emily Turgeon, Hannah Boyko, Hayley Hopgood, Jennifer Fortier, Jessica Adams, Jill Ford, Kacy Classen, Kat Glowacki, McKenzie Hryciuk, Morgan Reid, Paige Lytle, Selina Leung, Taylor Nohavicka.*

#### **Gaynor Family Regional Library**

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, this past January my constituency welcomed the opening of the Gaynor Family Regional Library in Selkirk with over 600 people attending. This new library was the result of a partnership between the Province, the community and nearby municipalities. I want to just thank the mayors of Selkirk, St. Clements and St. Andrews for their support.

Mr. Speaker, we were able to provide \$1.6 million through the Building Manitoba Fund and the donation of two acres of provincial land.

Jim and Betty Anne Gaynor also deserve many thanks for the generous donation of \$1.5 million which helped make this library a reality.

Mr. Speaker, for many years this space will provide residents of Selkirk and nearby RMs with a welcoming atmosphere where they can discover and enjoy their favourite literature. We know a library is more than that. It's also a great—a meeting space and have knowledgeable staff and of computers to help individuals with the endless resources on the Internet. Already the library have had several conferences, nearly a dozen meetings and welcomed hundreds of visiting children.

Mr. Speaker, it is incredible what can be accomplished when government and communities share a vision for this project and work together to see it to completion.

I want to thank all the dedicated staff, volunteers, library board and community partners, Mr. Speaker, and I want all members of this Chamber and all Manitobans to visit Selkirk and visit this jewel in our rural library system.

Thank you.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

### BUDGET DEBATE (Sixth Day of Debate)

**Mr. Speaker:** We will now proceed to orders of the day, government business, and to resume adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government and the proposed amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities, who has 26 minutes remaining.

**Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities):** As I was sharing yesterday, I want to continue on, of course, highlighting our \$5.5-billion plan, Mr. Speaker. I was—I had the opportunity to talk about some of the recent announcements on Highway 75 and bringing it to flood standards. We've seen improvements around Trans-Canada east and west, bridges and shoulders, making these highways more safer, the recently announced bypass around Headingley near Centre-Port way. Of course, we've heard many times, I've heard many times our Minister of Finance talk about the geographic advantage we have here in

Manitoba, and we're going to make sure that we maximize that potential with the support and the work and investments we've done in CentrePort, of course, the improvements around the Perimeter Highway southwest and northeast.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, this budget also has incredible investments and supports for municipalities all over the province of Manitoba, including the city of Winnipeg. You know, the citizens of Winnipeg have asked us to support and improve roads. Well, we're going to give them better roads. They've asked us to improve water and sewer. We're investing in water and sewer, and, of course, they wanted us to get moving on rapid transit—and we're moving on rapid transit.

One of the broadest and most generous contribution of any agreement between a province and a city is ours with the City of Winnipeg, over \$200 million, close to \$200 million in capital, close to \$300 million in operating capital, and we've been able to increase this every year since we've been in government. This also goes—when I talk about operating, goes also into health and safety of our communities, the support for police and cadets in the city of Winnipeg, for firefighters, for paramedics and, of course, for public transit.

I was very proud to stand with our Premier (Mr. Selinger) and Mayor Sam Katz and do a historic 250-million-over-five-years announcement, 66 million of new dollars, Mr. Speaker, and that money is going to go directly into fixing and upgrading our streets, fixing potholes, resurfacing streets so when people look outside their window they have streets they can be proud of, and when streets are in such disrepair we're going to rebuild those streets.

\* (11:00)

This coming spring over 100 projects are starting that's virtually going to touch every neighbourhood in the city of Winnipeg, and I just have a quote here, actually, from Mayor Katz I'd like to read on the record. Mayor Katz, he's grateful to the NDP government for its commitment to working together to address Winnipeg's infrastructural needs.

But I got to say, although I really like that quote from Mayor Katz, I like another quote here, and it comes from the member from Thompson: Winnipeggers love the smell of coffee in the morning, Mr. Speaker, but we want to get them used to the smell of asphalt. That's what this budget is

going to do. It's going to fix our streets—municipalities all over the province.

You know, our—as I was saying, since 1999, just with the City of Winnipeg alone, we've been able to provide funding increases up to 130 per cent, from \$129 million all the way to close to \$300 million in Budget 2014, Mr. Speaker. We're very proud of the kinds of investments we're making. A great example of that is the fifty-fifty transit partnership that we have. That was the type of—one of the most generous contributions that a province makes. It is the most generous contribution that any provincial government makes to a city, to a major city. We protected that in legislation, and the reason we protected that in legislation, because when members opposite were in government, they actually cut that agreement, so we had to reinstate that.

I know that this is a very exciting, a very needed partnership. In fact, yesterday I was able to stand next to Mayor Katz, as well as the Honourable Steven Fletcher, and actually accept not just one award, but multiple awards on—from the Canadian Public Works Association on our contribution and our partnership around public transit. This award was highlighting the phase 1 of rapid transit.

Once again, governments—our budgets build. And, you know, every growing city needs and has to have state-of-the-art transit, modern transit, and that's what we've been investing in. But when we invest in transit like rapid transit, it's not just for that. We are able to integrate projects and add and do other infrastructure, like, as an example, we recently announced with the City of Winnipeg \$225 million for phase 2 of rapid transit. It's going to create over 4,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be able to deal with some water and sewage—sewer issues, and, of course, it's going to promote active transportation.

We're going to continue in this budget to support police. There's close to \$18 million going into public safety, with an additional \$300,000 coming from Budget 2014, 127 officers, Mr. Speaker. You know, a very successful cadets program—continue to make close to a \$2-million investment in that. Fire paramedics, very—over \$10 million going into fire paramedics. And we're very—you know, this budget is about jobs, and we are putting a lot of emphasis and a lot of investment into making sure that young people are getting the training, getting the opportunities, to one day either become police officers, to become fire paramedics.

We also continue to make investments into waste-water treatment, water and sewer. It's one of the largest, most significant upgrades going on from the Province and City, \$8.8 million—over \$50 million by the Province to date, Mr. Speaker. And we continue to invest and touch neighbourhoods all throughout the city of Winnipeg and, of course, the province.

You know, when you actually look at the investments our government has made, there's a lot of symbolic things that you can see. And I think our former premier, when he came back in from Washington, he once again said how wonderful it was to see all the cranes in the skies when he came back to Winnipeg and to Manitoba, because over and over and over again, we're seen as builders. Nothing is more significant or so symbolic of the approach that we take versus members opposite. All you have to do is look at Winnipeg's downtown in the 1990s and look at Winnipeg's downtown to date. We've partnered in every major redevelopment project in our downtown. We've supported over 100 major projects, \$2 billion of investment in our downtown since 2005.

You know—and we see this. We see this with the MTS Centre. You know, we're very proud of the MTS Centre and I want to say that there's over a million visitors to the MTS Centre every year, making it one of the busiest facilities of its kind in all of North America. But I got to say, what's incredible about the MTS Centre, and Mark Chipman reminds me of this over and over again, that that is the loudest building that when an NHL game is played, is here in Winnipeg. That's because the investments we're making encourages and builds on the incredible momentum and enthusiasm we see from the citizens of Manitoba.

You know, major investments in Centrepoin hotel and the Met theatre, all part of the development of the sports-hospitality-entertainment district. You know, we're incredibly proud of what we see going on at The Forks under the leadership of Jim August—over four million visits a year.

You know, the member from Selkirk talked with pride about what's going on and the partnership we have in Selkirk around the library. Well, the Millennium Library has close to 1.5 million visits per year. We're seeing now, with the expansion of the University of Winnipeg, Red River College, now 24,260 students go to school in the core area. That's an increase of 16,000 students since 2007.

Mr. Speaker, 69,000, over 69,000 people now work in our downtown. New housing in and around the downtown, close to 2,000 housing units constructed since 2005 alone, with close to 900 more planned and over 16,000 people now live in the downtown.

Bicycle commutes: of course, we care about active transportation and that has rose over 60 per cent.

You know, one of the things that we see that's going on right now and something that is going be not only a legacy, but it's going to be part of our identity in the province of Manitoba, is the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Investments in the partnerships we're proud to work with families, with the private sector, with our labour friends to the very exciting opening this year—later this year.

Mr. Speaker, \$180-million expansion to the RBC Winnipeg Convention Centre. You know, nothing is more symbolic about what's going on in our downtown and the approach that we actually take to create jobs, to build on the enthusiasm, to maximize the potential of individuals and families that are living in our communities. You know, downtown Winnipeg is in the smack dab in the middle of the period of unprecedented growth and renewal. That comes from the Downtown BIZ. That's a quote from them. Winnipeg's downtown is booming with more than \$2 billion of investment, 111 new megaprojects completed since 2005, quote from the Winnipeg Sun.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that I get a quote in here from the Winnipeg Free Press about the contrast between the kinds of investments we make versus what was happening in the 1990s. The strong growth in the inner city marks the continuation of a long-term rebound from the dark days of the 1990s. They go on to talk about the no-growth '90s. That's why, you know, every time we stand up and talk about the '90s, the Leader of the Opposition, that's his record. He should embrace it; he should be proud of it, but he doesn't. Every time we talk about the 1990s they start heckling. They start yelling, but that's their record. The Leader of the Opposition was in Cabinet. They should embrace that.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, all you have to do is look at the downtown as symbolism, and one of the things that we know is they oppose it; they vote against these investments, but they never forget to show up to celebrate once they're built. That's what

Budget 2014's doing. It continues to invest in communities all throughout the province.

You know, one of the things we know is that when you talk to parents, when you talk to grandparents, what they'll tell you is they want their children to go to school here; they want their children and their grandchildren to get their first jobs here, and in their first jobs they want their children and grandchildren to start thinking about the kinds of careers that they could have because they want those children and grandchildren to raise their families here. That's why we continue to make incredible investments in the early years. You know, one of the most—outside of Quebec, the most affordable child care in all of the country next to Quebec, over 1,000 spaces in this budget alone. But we're also putting a lot of emphasis in making sure that some of our most vulnerable families are getting the support they need. You know, we put—and we probably put a lot of—we probably put a lot of emphasis on working with the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and others to make sure that the investments we're making are going to make a difference for some of the families that struggle the most.

\*(11:10)

You know, Mr. Speaker, we take this research, the research that we get, we share it with partners. We share with educational partners, health professionals, family resource centres, to support some of those vulnerable families in the investments we're making in early childhood development, in early childhood education.

You know, what happens when you make and you work with these partners, that leads to evidence-based programs. Manitoba leads, and Budget 2014's supporting this, Manitoba leads the nation in evidence-based programming, meaning the investments we make for programs are the most effective for children and young people all throughout the country, here in Manitoba alone.

The Healthy Baby program, the Prenatal Benefit, as an example, and this is collected through data, through evaluation. That investment alone, supporting our lowest income mothers that are pregnant, we know that that reduces preterm births, and when babies are born, they're born at a healthy baby weight.

You know, our Families First home-visiting program, where we're going in and talking to parents, helping build self-confidence of new parents. That's

what happened to me, Mr. Speaker. A home visitor came and saw me, she built up my confidence and let me know about a lot of the services and resources that are available. We're doing that all throughout the province.

And, of course, you know, I've got to thank the member from St. Johns, the first in the nation to launch the Abecedarian project, Mr. Speaker, the first in the nation, that puts a lot of emphasis on literacy, language and numeracy for children. And so, when they go into school, they'll have a sense of belonging because they're going to know that that's where they belong because they're going to have the literacy and language and numeracy skills that they actually need.

And the programs that we're investing in early childhood development does an incredible amount to engage parents, to engage grandparents and to engage caregivers to not only get more involved in their child's educational career, but the over health and well-being of their children. Mr. Speaker, these are the kinds of investments that we're making.

I do want to say, when you invest in evidence-based programs, world-class programs, what it does, it builds on the idea that it leads to world-class partners, Mr. Speaker. So who's supporting early childhood development? World-class people like Art Mauro, the founder of the Manitoba business council, now working with us in a way that's going to support some of our poorest and most vulnerable children; people like Gregg Hanson, now working directly with this government on the investments that we're making; people like Dave Angus and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce—people like this.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we were able to draw in national recognition and attention from the McConnell Foundation, where they said we can invest anywhere in the country in early childhood development, but where we're going to do it is in Manitoba, because there's a golden moment in Manitoba because they invest in world-class research. They invest in world-class programs. And that's drawing in world-class support from people like Art, from Gregg, from Dave, from Mark from the McConnell Foundation. That's what Budget '14's doing.

I just want to touch, of course, of how important it is that a young person that gets their first job, they start to realize that they can actually have a career. So this budget continues to invest, of course, in Green Teams, one of the most effective and popular

programs not only in the province but in the country. Another investment into the Green Team program: over \$500,000 going in to support young people for summer employment. The investments we're making every summer, direct touches by our government, 60,000 young people staying busy every summer, Mr. Speaker, from our investment.

So, you know, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that in Budget 2014 the investments are there for the early childhood development. And we're engaging families and we're engaging people from the private sector. We're working with our labour partners, working with families directly. We're going to continue to partner through programs like our After School Leaders program, with—or like with Red River College, with University of Winnipeg, with True North Foundation. We're going to continue through our Bright Futures program, to expose young people to jobs for the future. This is a budget that is going to maximize the potential of children, maximize the potential of young people and maximize the potential of families.

Thank you.

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, it's good to put a few things on the record. First off, I want to thank the people from Lakeside for the opportunity to represent them here in this great Legislative Building. I can tell you that, this being my 11th year being in this House, I can tell you how proud I am to be able to do that.

I want to start off by talking about local government. And, of course, what we see now is another lawsuit against the government. The current minister seems to attract a lot of lawyers into the court business. Just last year, he had a recent court hearing with the Downs and, of course, you know, that was a \$5-million business and lost 500 jobs potentially. And, of course, we know that—how important that industry was, and they keep saying that it's about hospitals and education.

Well, I can tell you that the minister on this forced-amalgamation and the former minister brought forward amendments in regards to change in some of the legislation so some municipalities would not be forced into amalgamation. But I know Eriksdale, Grahamdale and Siglunes was forced into amalgamation. In fact, they had a number of meetings; the minister did show up there, and I can tell you that what it's done is pitted one community against the other.

And I don't blame AMM for taking the government to court. This has not worked out the way the municipalities had hoped. In fact, they had no consultation. The member from Dawson Trail was the one that broke the news to them just a year before at their annual convention right here in Winnipeg. And I can tell you that talking to those people, those municipalities that's been forced into amalgamation has certainly not been beneficial for any of them.

And they talk about creating more jobs. Well, I can tell you, a number of jobs are going to be lost through the amalgamation. They've talked about being able to flow money that much easier.

I can tell you that the judge is going to have a tough decision to make in regards to how he wants to handle this decision. And I understand that this—the hearing has been stayed for the time being, and I know his decision will be coming down as we—as the weeks and days move forward.

I can tell you that I know what the AMM had said in the hearing, and, of course, their major problem, first off, was that it was forced on them. There was no consultation in this regard. And we held the bill up as long as we could, and I know that once the new minister was appointed he proceeded to send letters out to several municipalities telling them who they were going to be merged with. Another prime example is the community of Riverton being forced to merge with Bifrost, and I can tell you I met with them as well and there's certainly still a lot of problems there. Even though they're being forced to merge, I can tell you that they're not going to forget. They're not going to forget the fact that this government shoved it down their throat and they're certainly not pleased about it. And I know the members opposite have had conversations with them, and unless they want to make some changes I know that they'll feel the repercussions in the years to come as a result of that.

I also want to talk about the announcement yesterday that the minister had talked about in regards to funding with roads and bridges within the municipalities. I can tell you that not all municipalities are happy about that. This is a five-year program and they said that they would promise some more money. And I can tell you that, certainly, talking to those municipalities yesterday in their deliberations after, I can tell you that not all is well with the relationship between the municipalities and this government. So I can tell you that they

should be listening and have a little more consultation with them in that regard.

Also, I want to talk about Hydro, and we've asked a number of questions regard to Hydro in the days prior. And I can tell you that, again, it's a project, it's an investment that we think that needs to be put on pause so that the PUB can have their hearings, look at the data. They—has been several expert witnesses that's been summoned to have their thoughts and concerns brought forward. This is about a \$20-million expense for the government, an expense, we feel, that is worthwhile as long as the government listens. But to go out and let a contract for \$1.4 billion without any consultation yet on this, and it's been less than—just a little over two weeks since the PUB started their hearings. And the La Capra report was very clear and a number of recommendations in regards to the PU, and I've asked the minister to have a look at those. It might be a great deal; we don't know. But what we do know, we need to listen to Manitobans, we need to listen to the experts.

\* (11:20)

And the ones that are going to be put at risk here are the ratepayers of Manitoba. We've had a 23 per cent increase just in the last few years. They're anticipating at 3.9 per cent increase for the next 20 years. The rates are going to go up 137 per cent for those ratepayers who's going to pay all the cost of not only Bipole III but the line going down to Minnesota and over to Wisconsin. Our share of that is going to be around the neighbourhood of \$400 million, of which we're not going to have ownership of. It's going to belong to the Americans, and we call that investment in the future. We're creating jobs by spending, but the jobs are in America, not here in Canada, and I find that very, very—in a situation where we should not be. And that's \$400 million that is gone out of Manitobans' hands, paid for by Manitobans, and we can tell you very clearly that the Manitoba ratepayers are the ones that are going to be onto it for years to come.

I know that, you know, they put a pause on Conawapa, but they want to proceed with Keeyask, and one would ask is why we don't want to finish one before they start the other. Obviously, they have some misleading information. In fact, the CEO for Manitoba Hydro, Mr. Thomson, yesterday outlined plan 5, and that's looking at natural gas, and the Minister of Hydro has said very clearly he does not want to go down that route. I don't know if that's—if

he has the evidence to support that. He says these jobs are going to go to Alberta rather than stay here in Manitoba with the natural gas.

And I know that I did have a conversation with our friends to the south in North Dakota and they said, yes, we'll gladly buy your power at a discounted rate; that 3 cents is cheaper than we can produce it ourselves, but we only want it for a year because are building a new gas-fired plant. They're going to be up and running within the next couple of years. With the fracking and the drilling in North Dakota, they have become one of the most successful states in the States because of their oil and gas through the Bakken drilling.

I want to also just put on the record, Mr. Speaker, in regards to the Hydro issues in regards to the 25 proposed billion dollars that this is going to cost—and the government, very clearly, has decided to move ahead with Bipole III; they spent over a billion dollars already—the contracts are not even going to be built here. The towers are going to be built in India. That's not creating jobs here. I know we had a plant here in Manitoba, Sperling Industries, who bid on the job; they were not successful. So what did the government decide to do? They sourced out the towers in India. A local company, a Manitoba company that creates some jobs right here in Manitoba, the government decided they didn't want to do that, a company that I know that has a great record and they have done a lot of work with Manitoba Hydro. Obviously, this government decided that they wanted to outsource this rather than employ people right here in Manitoba.

And I know also, within regards to Hydro, a number of people have talked to me in regards to tenders in regards to coming from other provinces. I know BC Hydro has a number of teams here that's been brought in to subcontract with Manitoba Hydro. I have no idea how much money has been spent in British Columbia, but I can tell you this for sure, that those jobs should be made right here in Manitoba rather than being sourced outside of the province of Manitoba.

Also, the \$25-billion proposed expenditure for Manitobans going to put Manitoba Hydro debt, you know, probably around that \$30-billion mark. And we know that when we look at cost—in fact, there was just a recent article in regards to that on cost of dams that was based on past history, past experience. And I can tell you that normally—normally—when you look at cost of a dam that's being built and if we look at

the past history of Manitoba Hydro, the building was supposed to be \$180 million, ended up costing \$280 million, and cost in regards to the dams normally double. So, if that's the case in past history, they say on that side of the House it repeats itself, certainly, we're going to have more expenditures on these dams than actually what they're projecting. So I urge the government to pay attention to what's going on.

I want to talk about the PST and the impact in regards to, again, local government. The Province's PST is going to have an additional \$2.2 million for planned upgrades to the south end water treatment plant. Now, that's one government funding another government, and I can tell you that the City of Winnipeg is going to either have to absorb that or the Province is going to have to come to the table with more money. So, when we look at price increases and tax increases, the ripple effect is one that's going to be going on for times and times to come. And we know that the government has made that a 10-year program so any future costs—in fact, I just noticed there was a press release from the government in regards to upgrades in Dauphin today, and it would be interesting to see how much increase there was because of the PST in that announcement today as well.

I know that when we look at the overall cost and what we're seeing in businesses here in Manitoba, and the member from Point Douglas was talking about how downtown Winnipeg is booming. And I can tell you the business people I've been talking to certainly are not near as confident as the member from Point Douglas puts it out to be. I can tell you the announcement in regards to the apprentice program, I also have a number of business friends that are looking for apprentices, but what they find is they've been training them and then they leave. They go to Alberta or to Saskatchewan. It's a program that should be popular, but, obviously, there's some flaws in it and that needs to be looked at in that regard. I can tell you that a number of businesses are certainly not very happy about that.

In regards to broken promises, I can tell you that, when we look at this government that said they would not raise taxes in 2011 election, in fact, they were going to rebate taxes to seniors. And they—talk is cheap, but it takes money to actually make it happen, and they have not fulfilled that promise. They said that the farmers would be rebated the 100 per cent of the education tax. They did not do that either. In fact, they put a cap on it of \$5,000, and

they also put a cap on so that they could only have one application, whether that be a corporation, a father-son, a husband and wife. So, actually, it's a savings of about \$62 million, another promise that now farmers are going to have to pick up that cost in regards to another broken promise from this government.

I can also tell you that families are paying taxes. They are paying \$1,600 average more this year than past, and people that are working hard trying to make ends meet are finding it tough. I know a number of my people in my area have been talking to me in regards to what has happened with their actual dollars they're able to use as disposable income, and that ripple effect as we all know is going to be going on for some time to come.

I want to go back, the government announced their \$5.5-billion plan. In that plan they were talking about the outlet on Lake Manitoba. And we know how important that is, and a number of those families that have been out of their homes for two and a half years now, it'll be going on three in June, a number of them are still out of their homes. In fact, the government announced \$100 million just a couple of months ago in regards to helping those folks. Well, I can tell you—*[interjection]*—yeah, sure, lots of talk and no action. Those people are still out of their homes—still out of the homes. I mean, you can talk about all you want, you can talk about all you want, but unless—unless they're going to actually take action and do something.

And the infrastructure, they talk about this \$5.5 million. I can tell you it's the only department on that side where 27 per cent of the budget wasn't spent—wasn't spent—Mr. Speaker. They talk about all these great announcements that I can tell you one thing, they're just all talk and no action.

I know that in the flood of 2011 they talked about this multi-year funding that they're going to be able to have for ongoing support for those who were impacted by the flood. Well, I can tell you last year it wasn't in the budget, this year it wasn't in the budget. Again, just all talk from this government.

And I can tell you people do remember. I know the member from Interlake has talked about it with his caucus as well, and I feel for the member from Interlake, because I can tell you I know I get a lot of those same calls and the people are just not happy. They're not happy that the government didn't own up to what they said they were going to do, so it puts not only those people at a disadvantage, but it puts all of

us in Manitoba at a disadvantage because that land or that crop now is not going to be able to be processed until that land actually gets back in production.

\* (11:30)

So I know that when we talk about a number of the costs that are proposed by this government, we'll just have to wait and see whether or not they really want to move forward on any of those.

The core government budget deficit is now going to be about \$324 million, user fees are going to be increased by about \$25 million, core government fees are up 4.4 per cent, which is \$569 million in Budget '14, versus the \$545 million budgeted in 2013.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that there was a reason our leader brought forward the amendment that he did, and I will be supporting that amendment. We will not be supporting this budget because we know very well that this government does not keep its word and does not keep its promises. So we look forward to having further debate on the budget. But I can tell you that it's unfortunate this government doesn't keep its commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake):** Well, good morning, Mr. Speaker.

It's my pleasure rise in the House today and put a few thoughts on the record in regard to the budget. I want to congratulate our Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) on her first budget. It's no doubt an interesting process putting it together, especially in challenging times.

And it was interesting listening to the member opposite just now. I was trying to decipher where a Conservative government would go, and my reaction was: nobody moves, nobody gets hurt. That seems to be the approach over there.

You know, talk about amalgamations, for instance, which is a difficult process, there's no question and it's going to be some work to make it come to pass, but members opposite would do nothing, obviously. They would just leave it as is. You know, the fact that there are probably close to a hundred municipalities that have less than a thousand people in them, of that 100, probably 50 of them have less than 500 people. You know, the tax revenues that a municipality like that gathers, 70 per cent of their revenues go just toward administrative costs, paying the salaries of the CAO

and a grader operator or two. That's not sufficient to go forward into the 21st century and do the development in rural areas that is necessary. That's the reason that our government is going down this path of amalgamation.

I know the sustainable development institute did a study and recommended that a municipality have a minimum of 3,000 people, not 300 people. With apportioned tax base of \$130 million, that gives a municipality the means to invest in infrastructure, invest in economic development and so forth. Otherwise, they're just going to continue to languish and, well, languishing seems to be what works for members opposite. So, if that's their course, so be it, but we will move forward.

I want to welcome the new members to the Legislature, the members for Arthur-Virden and Morris, and bid farewell, of course, to Larry Maguire and Mavis Taillieu. It's something we see quite often on the opposite side of the Chamber here, members flying the coop and going off elsewhere.

Of course, there's a good example set; their leader did the very same thing himself at a most critical, critical time in Manitoba history, I might add as well. Mr. Speaker, 1997, the flood of the century, their leader was a member of the Filmon Cabinet at the time, in guess what portfolio? Emergency measures, he was the minister responsible for emergency measures. Mere weeks before the flood of the century, what did he do? Abandon his post for his own personal gain, ran off to Ottawa and now, of course, he's come back and, you know, his ambition to be the Premier and so forth. But we see what kind of leadership we would have from members opposite if it should ever happen they come to power.

Now one of the things that the leader opposite or the leader for the opposition opposite has been talking about is infrastructure and, obviously, once again, they would be doing nothing on that front because they would be making drastic cuts to the budget. It would be back to the bad, old days of the Conservatives. And I look back to 1999, when I was first elected, a good example would be the highways capital budget, which, at this point, with this government, is approaching half a billion dollars. When they were the government, it was less than a hundred million. I think it was in the 80- to 90-million-dollar range, and there's not much you can do with a small sum like that, but that's where they would take us back.

And I look to my own constituency, in the 10 years that Gary Filmon was the premier of this province not one foot of asphalt was laid in my constituency. I don't mean a mile or 10 miles, not a foot of road work was done over the decade that they were in office. Compared to our government it would—you're—we're hard pressed to find a road that isn't at an RTAC standard now. So I'm very proud of our commitment to infrastructure.

Members opposite, the do-nothing party—I'll take you back to 1999 once again, Mr. Speaker, when we were first elected and I was, you know, somewhat new to the job, obviously, and a little naive. I thought, how much could there be left to be done, quite frankly. We've been a country for a hundred and forty or fifty years and we're entering into the 21st century, but, boy oh boy, when I came into office here one of the first things we had to do was reconstitute The Water Rights Act because members opposite had been so lax and so remiss in addressing the water infrastructure needs of rural Manitoba that a judge at the time in the Hildebrandt case actually threw The Water Rights Act out the window. His argument being that the government had done absolutely nothing. The system had fallen to pieces entirely. That was his message to members opposite. So we came to office, the second act that went through the Legislature was The Water Rights Act to reconstitute it.

Thinking of water, I have to look back to the flood of 2011 and, you know, how would members opposite react? Would they have reacted to the degree that this government did, you know, the nine stand-alone programs over and above standard disaster financial assistance? No, they wouldn't. It would be standard DFA. And, you know, reference was made earlier to the JERI program during the flood of 1997, but I don't—I wouldn't expect the same from members opposite.

You know, we've made the commitment to go into the Lake Manitoba area, the Lake St. Martin area to put the infrastructure in place necessary to flood proof that area. But for—from members opposite, who are—their whole reason for being seems to be apologists for the federal government and defending their lack of action. I would expect the same if, should it ever come to pass, they became the government.

A good case in point would be the Lake St. Martin emergency outlet, for example. This was an act this government took in the midst of the disaster

to mitigate the high flood waters, should be totally eligible for disaster financial assistance funding. Ninety per cent of the cost of that structure, which was close to a hundred million dollars, should be recoverable. To this date, not a dollar from the federal government. And it's so ironic because members of Parliament, Conservative members of Parliament troop across this province and say, oh, well, if the next big ditch out of Lake Manitoba to Lake St. Martin is going to be built, we're there, the money's already there. Utter nonsense, Mr. Speaker. Pay for the last ditch before you start telling us you're on—your money's on the table for the next ditch.

They made reference to a \$99.4-million program. This is what they were pointing to at the meeting at the Meadow Lea hall. That was a program that was for all of Canada and it was a three-year program, so you do the math on that. We have 3 per cent of the population, over a three-year period that means that Manitoba might get a million dollars—maybe a million dollars from the federal government to put toward flood mitigation infrastructure in this province. Obviously, that's not going to cost-share on a project worth a quarter of a billion dollars. So—but all we heard from members opposite, the leader, was apologies and excuses for the federal government. It was a sad state of affairs, and it's just fortunate for the people of Manitoba that they sit across the way and will remain there for some time.

\* (11:40)

I chaired the standing committee of the Legislature when Bill 20 came, and this was, of course, the PST increase, and a lot of that money is going to go toward flood infrastructure. And to listen to all of their political supporters, it was pretty obvious that it was a set-up, all of the people that came to that standing committee. And one after another I was listening to, flood? What flood? Was there a flood? That was years ago. You know, and we have floods all the time.

These were the kinds of excuses that their political supporters were giving us instead of acknowledging that this was not the flood of the century but the flood of the millennium, that the damage was astronomical, that three years later we still have people evacuated, and most of them Aboriginal people where the federal government has the fiduciary responsibility to deal with that issue. And their attitude toward these people was, the

flood's over, they can go back to their homes. Well, if you'd seen the state of these homes, they were a total writeoff. And those people have been sitting in hotels for three years waiting for Ottawa to come to its senses. And I think, finally, we may be approaching that. I know that our government recently put \$100 million on the table toward specifically that, getting those people back in their homes. And we wait with bated breath to see if, you know, the federal government is going to step up and do the right thing.

There's a whole range of things I'd love to talk about, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that much time but, you know, I look to some of the mega-infrastructure projects that our—this government is committed to. In my particular constituency, I mentioned the big drain out of Lake Manitoba but I look to the highway, for example, along the west side of the Interlake, up the—along Lake Manitoba, Provincial Trunk Highway No. 6. What a massive announcement this government made just a month or so ago. We'll be resurfacing almost the entire length of that highway from Grosse Isle to the south all the way to—practically to Gypsumville. I think there's one section of that highway, that entire length, that won't be resurfaced because we just resurfaced it, not too long ago. We'll be putting turning lane—or passing lanes into it. We'll be straightening curves out. You know, that is a huge commitment. And, again, it would be nice maybe if the federal government would consider cost-sharing on a project like that, given that that highway serves the entire North. It should have the status of a national highway so, you know, food for thought for members opposite: If they really want to proceed in our province maybe they should lobby their federal friends to help out a little bit.

Other strategies of members opposite—privatization, as we know, is a major theme with them, whether it's the privatization of health care, their leader is on the record as saying such, and I commend our Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) for specifically expressing in her budget speech that we were opposed to that and always will be. But, you know, members opposite, that's their strategy. We know that they attempted that back in their term in office with home care, something that was created in this province by one of our most visionary leaders, the Right Honourable Ed Schreyer. Those people opposite tried to do away with that, to privatize it, to turn it over to some American firm. You know, it's really a pathetic approach to health care, especially in regards to the most vulnerable people in our

province, which is the elderly. But that's what we can expect from them.

Hydro, they've been disparaging the reputation of this stellar Crown corporation for the—all the time that I've been in office, and that's what they did with MTS as well. They disparaged them, criticized them, brought down their reputation and when they came into office, promptly privatized it. So, you know, we're watching for that to happen with Hydro if they should ever come to office. But I look to other Crowns as well.

The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation is what I really fear, you know, the Leader of the Opposition, very experienced in the insurance business, this is a sitting duck for him, Mr. Speaker, right up his alley. All—him and all his cronies would be making millions off of that. And it's—and I can attest to the fact that this is their strategy because the person that I ran against in the last election, Steve Lupky, works for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation and put that on the record during his election campaign, that this is something that they would be considering. So, you know, that's pretty black and white to me. So—and I see the clock is running out.

I do want to give members opposite—one final thing that I would like to just make brief mention of in this speech, the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) announced a program in Red River for people with mental disabilities, and I was incredibly impressed with that. I thought that was something visionary, something new, a brilliant move, and I really, from the bottom of my heart, want to credit her for that.

And I look to my constituency, there's Riverdale Place Workshop in the town of Arborg and they also have Riverdale Place Homes where people with disabilities work and live, and I know a lot of the people there and they do the recycling program in the town of Arborg. They also build picnic tables. They build pallets for the Diageo plant in Gimli, and when you see them working you can see the pride that they have. They want to work and they're very proud of what they do, and recognition of that and taking it to the technical school level, I think, was a visionary move, and I congratulate our Finance Minister on that move.

And, on that note, Sir, I relinquish the floor to other members.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to get up and

comment on the budget that was just released several weeks ago. This is not the first budget that I've had the opportunity to speak to. In fact, it's approximately the 15th one.

And over the years, I, amongst others in this Chamber, have been concerned about their direction of where this government is going, and would like to quote to this House—and I've used this individual before, his name is Thomas M. Cunningham, and he runs a leadership course for US Navy—Naval Academy Fire Department. And one of the quotes that I like particularly is he talks about different qualities of leadership, and he goes on to say, and this is a direct quote: "Of all the qualities a leader must possess, integrity may be the most important one of them all." And the problem with this particular life cycle of a government is they started off with no integrity.

In the 2011 campaign, we had a Premier (Mr. Selinger), 57 NDP candidates who went to the door, knocked on each and every door and said that they would live up to all of their expectations, all of the promises, everything that they had laid out in their program, without raising taxes. In fact, the Premier of the day, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), was pushed by the media on this particular point. And he is on the record—on video, you can see it on YouTube—as saying the concept of raising the PST is nonsense. Basically, what he said was: Read my lips. No new taxes. When asked about taxes in general, he said there would be no tax increases, to live up to the promises and commitments made by the NDP in the 2011 campaign. Every one of the 57 NDP candidates for MLA in the 2011 election campaign went door to door and used the same line. Every NDP candidate misled their constituents, because the first thing the NDP did when they got into this Chamber, their first budget, is they broadened taxes, including the PST, amongst other taxes, on almost everything. They raised almost the most taxes in the history of the province.

\* (11:50)

What Manitobans in this Chamber did not realize is that was the first step of a two-step plan, which brought us last year's budget, in which, categorically, if the first budget wasn't proof that this NDP was going to go back on its word, the second budget showed them for what they were. The minister of the day of Finance got up and said the PST would go up by 15 per cent. He raised it to an 8 per cent PST. This is the same minister who

represents the same Premier (Mr. Selinger) who said on the record, not even two years previous, that to raise the PST was nonsense. Read my lips, he said; no new taxes.

So, what we have now is the third budget of this term, and I go back to Mr. Cunningham's quote, and I ask the Chamber to just reflect on it. He says, and I quote: Of all the qualities a leader must possess, integrity may be the most important one of them all. Unquote.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is the crux of the problem that this NDP government has found itself in. We have heard, over the last two years, a lot of spin, a lot of talk, a lot of blame, a lot of finger pointing, a lot of machinations. We've seen divisions in the government. We've seen mixed messages out of the government. They are having trouble spinning their way out of where they are today, because of the fact that of all leadership qualities, integrity is the greatest of them all. They cannot spin themselves out of this, because they lack integrity in the way they have carried on with their budgets. They campaigned—each and every one of the members opposite campaigned that they would not raise the PST, that they would not raise taxes, and left that impression at every door. And what did they do when got in here? They threw integrity aside, and the member for The Maples thinks this is funny.

**An Honourable Member:** Tyndall Park.

**Mr. Schuler:** Tyndall Park—the member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino) thinks this is funny, and his colleagues think this is funny. The fact that they lack integrity when it comes to the budgeting process, they think, is a joke. And I would suggest to them they be very careful because the public will, in the end, have the last say and may just find them wanting.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to members opposite that they stop treating this as a joke, that they stop treating the public as fools, that they stop trying to spin and 'subdifuge' and lie and get their way out of whatever way possible. *[interjection]* The member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) refers to members here as a clown, derogatory comments, that this is like a speech of a clown. He finds—he thinks that this is foolish.

I know of families who are struggling financially. I know of families who are troubled with the kinds of decisions they have to make. And we sit in this Legislature and we hear comments like the

member from Concordia that play them for the fool, and that is a disgrace. It lacks integrity; it is wrong. These families are struggling, and we, each and every one of us, knows of these families, and the least we could do—and I give this current Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) credit. She has got up and probably out of all of them has said this was a tough decision, and she's right. Throwing their integrity overboard must have been a very tough decision, but that's what they've done.

I would point out to members in this House, if you go back in Hansard—myself, used to be the member for Springfield; now I'm the member for St. Paul. Back then, I, amongst a lot of others, warned the government of the storm clouds coming that someday they would have to pay for the kind of expenditures that they were making, and now the current Minister of Finance admits those storm clouds are here, and I give her credit, at least she doesn't treat this like a circus like the member for Concordia who thinks this is a joke and the member for Tyndall Park. This is serious. We disagree. We disagree with the government, but at least the current Finance Minister sees the seriousness in this matter.

This is not a budget that came out of integrity. This is not a government that is based on integrity. That train has left the station. That has gone and, Mr. Speaker, this is not a budget that I could ever support. This is not a government that I could ever support with my vote in this Chamber. This is a government that I would suggest traded in their integrity to try and somehow salvage their government.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of St. Paul—and I have surveyed them, I have listened to them, I have been in the community and spoken to them, and I would suggest the people of St. Paul find this government wanting. They do not appreciate the fact that they sacrificed their integrity, that even the NDP candidate who was not elected in St. Paul went door to door and misled them. They are not happy about that. This is not a budget that should be supported. This is not a government that should be supported.

I will support the amendment as put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, and I would suggest to the government that the first thing they should do is try and get some of their integrity back and start putting forward budgets that are believable, that people can trust again. This is not one of them.

Thank you.

**Hon. Erna Braun (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** I'm very proud to be standing here today to speak in support of our 2014 budget, and I want to thank our Finance Minister along with my wonderful colleagues in caucus, have come forward with a very forward-thinking visionary budget. I think what we are offering Manitobans is a very clear vision for a positive and forward-thinking future, a balanced approach that will create jobs, build our economy while reassuring Manitobans that the services that we hold dear: health care, education, community infrastructure are maintained.

What the members opposite offer is a singular narrow myopic view: balance the budget with total disregard to the health and well-being of our citizens.

Our budget recognizes that austerity measures don't work and only through continued investment, through creating good jobs, providing educational and work opportunities for our young people will our economy grow and flourish.

All Manitobans should have grave concerns over the promises made by members opposite. To slash 1 per cent of the budget across the board as the Leader of the Opposition is promising is irresponsible. To suggest an American-style health-care system, that's reckless and rash. What these statements should say to all Manitobans is that they are a party that doesn't care for all the citizens, but caters to those for whom the additional cost of health care isn't an issue, where tuition fees for private schools isn't a financial difficulty because the cuts they envision will not impact those with means, but will ruin the majority of hard-working Manitobans who rely on the myriad of resources and supports that are essential to their everyday lives.

Mr. Speaker, when the members opposite talk about balancing the budget and cutting 1 per cent from the budget I have visions of the 1990s, and I know that they aren't too happy to hear references to those dark days. However, listening to many of their proposals, it does beg the question that there is a bit of *déjà vu* here. Although they dismiss the previous government's tenure, I still recall them vividly, because to have been a teacher in those times was to live through some of the most dramatic and drastic measures that took a huge toll on families and the supports that affected their quality of life.

\* (12:00)

I've got many memories of the dark '90s. I recall the legislation to strip teachers of their collective

bargaining rights. I believe that was Bill 72. Public education was not seen by the previous government as a valued asset. In fact, measurements were taken to undermine its ability to be society's equalizer. Teachers know the importance of class size and composition and what that has on the quality of learning, and that by making classes smaller, we can address many of the learning needs of all students.

That's why we've listened to teachers, educators and parents, and recognized the importance of reducing class sizes in the early years. We value public education because giving our children a good start in their quest for learning is our future, and I'm very pleased that in the constituency of Rossmere we will see that in action with additional classrooms being built at John de Graff School. And I know that the parent council there and the administration were extremely excited to be able to be doing that. It's a huge community, with many students choosing that area to be their home community, and I am glad that we are recognizing that in order to support those families, we need to have smaller class sizes that—so those students have the best education possible.

But the direction that the opposition is advocating, cutting 1 per cent across the board, would essentially return us to their methods of the '90s. They passed legislation which stripped teachers of the ability to negotiate smaller classes or class composition because they saw that as a way to control the costs, but also control teachers and prevent them from negotiating any kind of improvements to classroom environments that would enhance the learning of the children. In fact, they added insult to injury by introducing work reduction days to the school year—10 days, which they proudly trumpeted as cost-reduction measures. How fiscally irresponsible, to deny children 10 learning days per year.

School division budgets were also reduced year over year, so that school divisions found themselves with their hands tied. Class sizes ballooned and students with special needs were left stranded. After all, as the minister of Education of the time said, there is only so much room in the lifeboat. How callous to think that our young people are expendable or, worse, collateral damage.

I'm proud that our attitude is one of inclusion and that we've seen the possibilities for all students by creating a post-secondary program at Red River for persons with intellectual disabilities. This government and this budget continues to demonstrate that

we value our students. We recognize that our young people are the future of this province. We want them to succeed, to have good jobs and great futures in our province of Manitoba. To ensure this success, we are setting goals that will expand the workforce and provide training opportunities for our young people that will lead to good jobs here in our province where our children can map out their futures. And one way we will do that is by increasing access to apprenticeships.

And not long ago I had the opportunity of speaking with several parents who were absolutely beaming because they were saying how motivated their children were in their high school, because now they had begun their apprenticeship programs. And one parent talked about how her son comes home at the end of a school day with a broad smile and a ton of automotive grease all over him. But he is going to be an apprentice in diesel mechanics and he's already been assured that, once he graduates from Miller Collegiate, he has a job waiting for him.

We are committed to all post-secondary education and our operating grants will continue to be increased so that the tuition fees for universities will be frozen at the rate of inflation, unlike those in the dismal '90s, where students could have double-digit increases to their tuition fees year over year.

So I do know that there are a number of my colleagues who wish also to add a few comments to the record on our outstanding budget, but as a former teacher I felt I needed to draw attention to the wonderful things that we are doing with this budget for our children and for their futures.

So, again, I wish to applaud the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard), my colleagues in caucus and the contributions that they've made in putting together this outstanding budget that will lead us into the future and have a secure workforce and a booming economy.

Thank you.

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, and it gives me great pleasure—thank you to my colleagues as well for acknowledging me standing up and talking today—yes, and so I'd again like to thank this House and welcome you back into the House for this early spring session, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad to see that we were able to make that arrangement to get here early March as opposed to the end of April, or even later, as this present government likes to get into the House.

I'd also like at this time to thank my constituents for the fantastic comments and encouragement that they provide me on each and every day. And I am privileged to represent the constituency of Lac du Bonnet, which covers the area from Garson-Tyndall all the way up to Bissett, having the communities and municipalities: again, Garson-Tyndall; Beausejour; Pinawa; Lac du Bonnet; Bissett, of course; Manigotagan; Little Black River; Sagkeeng First Nation; Powerview-Pine Falls; Victoria Beach; and then smaller communities such as St. George and that. And I absolutely enjoy travelling around the constituency and meeting many of the constituents on different—during different events or tackling certain issues that we're having in our beautiful area of the province, which I know that many of the ministers and people across the House do venture our way once in a while, whether that's to get to their cottage or get to some of their friends' cottages, which I'm sure they're getting quite the earfuls as of late in regards to some of the property tax increases that some of the cottage owners are experiencing due to this spenDP government.

At this time, I would also like to congratulate and welcome the two new members on this side of the House, the MLA for Morris and the MLA for Arthur-Virden, and I know that they're going to be assets to our caucus in the years to come.

And so, I guess, Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to do is get started and thank our Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, the member from Fort Whyte, on bringing forward this amendment to Budget 2014. There are many, many, many, many points that this current government should take a look at and, at the very least, adopt and amend their own budget. But I find that that probably will not happen due to the fact that over the last few years, since I've been in this House, their ability to listen to what Manitobans actually have to say seem to be getting fewer and fewer as their years, as far as their dying days of this NDP government is coming about within the next two years.

So I'd like to—since they like to jump on the love train and go back in time at certain times or whatever else, but we're actually going to go back a couple years for the 2011 election. And I'm going to remind Manitobans and, of course, members throughout this House, some of the broken promises that were in the 2011 election, which was, of course, my first election. And it was interesting that we had—there was 57 NDP candidates going around the province, and as we've heard more than—on more than one

occasion, going door to door and promising to each and every Manitoban that they actually got in front of to not raise taxes. And they would stand up, and there was pamphlets that were delivered. *[interjection]*

And I know that right now the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) is talking from his seat, and I'm not sure if he had a chance to speak already to the amendment, but if he hasn't I'm sure he'll get up and put a few words on the record himself as well. But I'm sure he did go door to door and he promised all those Manitobans in his riding of—or in his constituency of St. Norbert that he wasn't going to raise taxes. And it wasn't that long—*[interjection]* Oh, Mr. Speaker, the member from St. Norbert actually put on the—was just crowing from his seat that I would be wrong, and that he actually did not go door to door promising to not raise taxes. So that's pretty interesting because it was said by the leader of his party, the now Premier (Mr. Selinger), the member from St. Boniface, that said, during the election in September, that he was not going to read—raise taxes. Read my lips, he said, that would be utter nonsense, that Manitobans would think that they would raise, the NDP government would raise taxes.

\* (12:10)

Then we had, not even more than five, six months later, we had the 2012 budget come out and what happened? We saw an expansion of the PST to many, many goods and services that all Manitobans need. We're not talking the rich; we're not talking the middle-class; we're talking absolutely everybody. And those fee increases and tax increases to basic insurance, to haircuts, to fuel taxes, absolutely everything, totalling about \$184 million in the 2012 budget. But they sort of did that a little more, sort of, behind the auspices of their own, I think, about three or four Cabinet members, and they pulled that one out into the budget. And I think that was even a surprise to their own caucus.

But what did they do? They felt so good about putting the screws to Manitobans in the 2012 budget, they went ahead in 2013 and they did it right in front of their face, Mr. Speaker. They decided to raise the PST by one point, which equated to a 14 per cent increase, and what did that PST increase in 2013 equate to? It equated to \$277 million.

So, when you add up the \$277 million from 2013 and 184 from 2012, and then you, of course, expanded the PST on the expansion that they had done in 2012. They had about a \$500-million new

surplus into their general revenues for them to do ribbon cuttings, and we have not quite seen any quite—any finalizing or any announcements as far as grand openings.

So, when we're talking \$500 million and we're—we have approximately 1.2 million people in this wonderful province of ours, in Manitoba. So you're looking at an amount of \$400 per person or \$1,600 for a family of four that is coming right out of people's back pockets.

And, as many Manitobans know, early December 2013, we did a—I was given the critic portfolio for Education and Advanced Learning, which I am taking very seriously and I'm enjoying some of the acquaintances that I'm rekindling from a few years ago and throughout the many years that I was a teacher. I know that the minister that spoke just before me was speaking quite highly of her memories of being an educator, how many ever years ago that was.

And so, when we take a look at the amount of money that's been taken out of each and every Manitoban's back pockets, we start to think about what could people—and, again, we've heard the kitchen table, Cabinet table discussion as far as the Cabinet table is taking the \$400 off the kitchen table—well, what could people at the kitchen table be deciding to do with that \$1,600 for a family of four?

I know that I've put on the record that two years ago hockey for my two boys have totalled well over \$5,000, and this year, Mr. Speaker, with, of course, gas prices going up and the increase to the PST and that, we are going to be definitely outdoing that total, so \$1,600—I know to them, who sit on that side of the House and some of the ministers and with all the extra little committee dollars that they get sitting on that side of the House, I know that \$1,600 isn't a whole lot to them, but it is very important to the average Manitoban. And, as I said, I'm hoping that they're cherishing their dying days in government. They've got about two years left. And so I'm looking forward to that—the next election, whenever the Premier decides to call it and get door-knocking and see ourselves on that side of the House.

Now, we also talk about one of the other broken promises on—from the 2011 election. They went as well door to door, and, again, the member from St. Norbert included, 57 candidates, went door to door promising seniors—they were promising seniors that they were going to take all of their education tax off of their property, which was supposed to total

somewhere between 36 to 50 million dollars. And what have they done so far? They have not kept that promise, Mr. Speaker. They've totalled 14 to 16 million—oh, and the Finance Minister, had said, wait for it.

Well, Manitobans, again, have been waiting for 15 years for this NDP government to keep one of their promises. The NDP government continues to lie to Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, each and every year, especially when budget time comes out, Throne Speech comes out, you hear all these promises, but we're not seeing the results.

Mr. Speaker, what are we seeing? Well, we're seeing increased taxes. We're seeing income that could definitely be used by Manitobans for their own use go right out of their back pockets, right into the general revenues of this NDP government. Have they come even close to balancing a budget? No, they haven't. They have more than doubled our debt.

Now, I know that the Minister for Finance (Ms. Howard), the Finance Minister, is talking from her seat, and I know that she's already spoke on this issue. So I appreciate her to maybe take some time later on and stand up again and put some more words on record. I'm not quite sure if she had the chance to speak her total 30 minutes, but she'll get that chance again, Mr. Speaker.

So we come to the balanced budget promise in the 2011 election. Well, they had promised in the 2011 election, Mr. Speaker, to balance that budget by 2014. Well, we're here and now they continue to move that bar for them, as they see fit, without, again, getting close to balancing that budget. And we're talking three main topics that have given them an opportune time to actually either balance the budget or to bring down some of that outrageous debt that, unfortunately, my grandkids, my great grandkids, and so on, are going to have to pay for. And it's a sad, sad state, basically, because we're looking at the greatest transfer payments from the federal government of somewhere between 33 to 35 cents for each and every dollar that comes into their budget. Then we're looking at half a million dollars, at least, a year now, that, since they've increased that PST.

**An Honourable Member:** How's it going?

**Mr. Ewasko:** It's not going very well, the member from Morris—or Morden-Winkler had asked. No, it's not going well at all.

So they have quite a bit of positives working in their favour, Mr. Speaker, but, again, they're electing to put the screws to Manitobans.

**An Honourable Member:** Record government revenue.

**Mr. Ewasko:** And record government revenue, and also interest rates have not—never been the lowest. And I appreciate the member from Morden-Winkler helping me out with a couple of the statements as well.

Another thing that was brought forward in the 2012 Throne Speech, I guess, was the whole fact on forced amalgamations for municipalities. Now, this part of it sort of starts to worry me a little bit because I start to think, well, if they've tried that with municipalities, what—why—or how are they going to stop when it comes to school boards? And, now that I'm the Education and Advanced Learning critic, I start to, you know, listen to what the now minister has to say, and he has said a couple things that might have to raise some flags for those school boards and trustees that are working hard throughout the province.

\* (12:20)

We already saw last week in the Brandon School Division's budget that this NDP government, the new Minister for Education has cut 11 teachers' jobs. And, as I stated in question period, I would think that many teachers—and I've had many, many, many conversations with fellow teachers and colleagues throughout this wonderful province of ours—that I know that some of the new teachers are worried that that could very well be what's coming from this NDP government, Mr. Speaker.

Now, some of the things that were also put into the budget—we already heard from the Minister for Jobs and labour talking about the job creation of 59,000 jobs. Now we did take a look and see that that was actually 59,000 years—of job-years. And so, when the statement actually came out from the Conference Board, they're looking at somewhere between 8,500 to 11,000 actual jobs, and it's just simple, Mr. Speaker, is that this government continues to stand up each and every day, including budget day and Throne Speech, and lie to Manitobans.

And the problem is as being the Education and Advanced Learning critic, this is something that I'm hoping that members across the way—I know that members on this side of the House try to teach their

kids or grandkids in some of the situations or nieces and nephews to not lie on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker. And here we have a government that again went door to door in the 2000 election and whether it's budgets in 2012, '13 and now '14, the government is actually lying to Manitobans; and they can't stop. It seems to be an addiction with them. We might have to sign them up for another avenue of addictions foundations of Manitoba.

Now, some of the promises and some of the things that have happened, Mr. Speaker, in regard to advanced learning, we have the NDP continues to cap tuition at the rate of inflation, worsening the capital requirements our college and universities face. It is no wonder that the Manitoba's universities continue to rank at the very bottom of the list when compared to all the other universities across the country.

Now I know last year in Budget 2013 this government, the then-minister for Advanced Education was—

**Mr. Speaker:** We've been doing pretty good here for a while keeping the level down, but I'm having difficulty hearing the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) with his comments. So I'm asking for the co-operation of the House. Please keep the level down. We have a few more minutes to go yet, and I'd like to be able to hear all of his comments.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I know it's getting close to lunch time, and I'm sure that all honourable members are getting a little 'rowley.' So, again, back last year they had promised, this NDP government had promised the 5 per cent increase to universities and we know that that again was one of those broken promises. And this year they had come up with 2.5 per cent to universities and 2 per cent for colleges. Within that announcement as well, or the budget, they had announced that they were going to be bringing in COPSE closer to the department or actually collapsing COPSE and bringing it under the auspices of the Department of Education and Advanced Learning. So we'll see how that move basically carries out.

Now, when you take away or subtract a level of bureaucracy—I mean, really, in the big picture, that sounds like it's a pretty good idea, but, under this government, because of their lack of keeping their promises and keeping the truth, we'll see how this goes because technically COPSE was an arm of the government anyway. So, when they bring it in, it's

obvious that they're wanting to micromanage and keep things under wraps, because maybe they see that some of their power is starting to get—starting to leak out a little bit, Mr. Speaker. So this government is really good at squashing some of the people that might speak out against them.

As we have a new member—or not a new member but an MLA—an independent MLA sitting on this side of the House now, since there was a little bit of a controversy. And you might have heard about it, Mr. Speaker. There was a little bit of a controversy on that side of the House in regards to immigration, and so she finds herself now sitting on this side of the House. And I'm thinking we might have to make some room on this side of the House for some more independents coming over, because I think the bus over there, the big orange bus, is going to be driving over a few more of their members as time gets closer to that election, again, in those dying days of this NDP government.

Now, although the U of M and the U of W faculty associations came to an agreement with their respective administrations in 2013, we all remember when the NDP sat idly by while the university strike inflicted immeasurable stress on students in Brandon during the fall of 2011. Well, just within the last couple days, Mr. Speaker, we know that Collège universitaire de St. Boniface is experiencing much of the same, so we will—I know that in the news, it said that a—not the Minister for Education and Advanced Learning—it was an aide or a spokesperson for him mentioned that he would not be able to comment, because they are now in the negotiating. So what a time for stress—for added stress that these young students, youth or even young adults—they don't need that. I mean, they're coming up to exams. They're supposed to be finished their year or close to finishing their year by the end of April, and here they get a possible snag with a eminent strike. Now, I hope they're able to come to some sort of agreement, so that these people's education are not at risk, but time will tell. Maybe even sometime today we'll find out the results of that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, since 2007, Manitoba has had the lowest post-secondary graduation rate in Canada. I know that the NDP government likes to brag about their record, but the fact is, is that we are last in Canada. We are close to 66 per cent of graduation rates in Canada—or in Manitoba, sorry—and we need to do some things to improve that. And, you know, in the dying days of this NDP government, I see some good things for our education

system and advanced learning, our post-secondary institutions including apprenticeship, when we get to be back into government and actually turn some of this around.

Manitoba has the second highest drop-out rate in Canada since 2001 and has experienced the least success in improving rates of drop out from 2009 to 2012. Now, the government of the day has brought in legislation to mandate students to stay in school 'til 18, which really is an interesting initiative. It's going to be interesting, so I'm going to let out one of my Estimates questions here to see how that's working for them and to see what the rates are.

So, oh wait, Mr. Speaker, the—my predecessor, the member from Steinbach, was the Education critic and he, on more than one occasion, asked about certain things that the Education Department was tracking, and, as the Attorney General (Mr. Swan) for Manitoba's questioning, you know, what was that? It was actually some of—whether it was school closures or bomb threats or fire drills or bullying—

absolutely anything—they're not tracking it; that's half the problem. They don't know where they're going, because they don't know where they are.

All they know is that—all I know, Mr. Speaker, is that they're stuck in the '90s. We want to move forward. The kids, the students, the adults, the youth, the teachers, all education staff, they want to be moving forward. And that's why, in the dying days of this NDP government, I can hardly wait for the next two years so that we can get into government and finally make those changes that Manitobans are wanting. Now—

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

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) will have five minutes remaining.

The hour being 12:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.



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